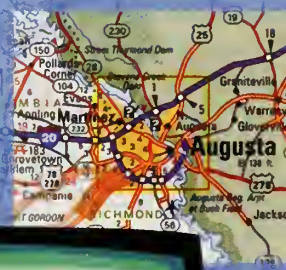
Today

The magazine of the Medical College of Georgia

Winter 2006

Volume 33 Number 3



Branching Out

MCG's Reach Extends Well Beyond Augusta

A Stronger Institution

President Daniel W. Rahn cites extraordinary progress

Home Away from Home

Hurricane-displaced students find a welcome mat at MCG

From the Presidents

This past fall, a colleague recommended a book by Dr. Atul Gawande, a member of the Harvard Medical School faculty and *The New Yorker* magazine's medicine and science columnist. The book, *Complications: A Surgeon's Notes on an Imperfect Science*, is a terrific read. In this book and in his other columns, Dr. Gawande explores the fallibility of science and eloquently presents medicine as a fundamentally human endeavor.

In a *New Yorker* essay called "The Bell Curve," Dr. Gawande explores the value and influence of national rankings of health care programs and individual practitioners ... how they motivate us and affect patients' decision-making. He writes that "we expect averageness to be resisted." We strive, we push and we lean forward to make ourselves better than the rest of the pack. That innate desire to excel has been critical to MCG's recent success.

This September, I delivered my fifth State of the University Address to the MCG community. I noted that we have become a better institution, a stronger institution, a more dynamic institution—an institution better-positioned to make an extraordinary impact on the health of the people of this state and nation.

And, as in previous years, I shared the data and assorted rankings and accolades to demonstrate our upward trajectory in our three mission areas: education, research and clinical care. But quantitative assessments of our worth tell only part of the story. That's why this magazine is such a valuable publication. *MCG Today* paints a picture that cannot be captured by national rankings, year-end data and percentage increases. These pages tell a more human story: one of outreach and of impact.

Certainly, the numbers are important. That's a fundamental part of our commitment to accountability. But equally important are the individual stories demonstrating that the good work of the Medical College of Georgia makes a positive difference in the lives of the citizens of Georgia and beyond. ⊷

Sincerely,

Daniel W. Rahn

Daniel W. Rahn, M.D.
President, Medical College of Georgia

You may have noticed that we deliberately use the following language to describe ourselves: "MCG Health, Inc. was formed to support the clinical, research and education mission of the Medical College of Georgia and to build the economic growth of the CSRA, the state of Georgia and the Southeast by providing an environment for faculty employees of the Medical College of Georgia and the MCG Physicians Practice Group Foundation and community physicians to deliver the highest level of primary and specialty health care."

While most people know we are a leader in health care in the CSRA, not many realize that the health system maintains a presence in virtually every county of Georgia and is a force in the western half of South Carolina. Our clinicians travel to satellite clinics and outreach facilities from Albany Children's Medical Services to Z&B Optical in Washington, Ga.

The MCG Physicians Practice Group Foundation also operates several physician office practices in the Augusta and Lake Oconee areas. In addition, we draw patients from across the country and have had patients come to us from as far away as South America and Asia. For example, Jacobito Reyes of El Salvador was a newborn when he had his initial surgery to remove a brain tumor at the MCG Children's Medical Center.

As you'll see on page 30, the health system continues to develop innovative programs to extend our reach to underserved populations. The REACH program is an interesting story. In the past, countless dollars and untold hours have been devoted to building elaborate telemedicine solutions. In the case of REACH, innovative clinicians and administrators constructed a lifesaving program out of ingenuity and Radio Shack components.

We are extremely proud that our geographic scope is wide and our impact is great. And we will continue to offer the clinical expertise, develop the programs and acquire the state-of-the-art technology that make us a valued health care provider for tens of thousands of people each year. ⊷

Sincerely,

Don Snell

Don Snell
President and Chief Executive Officer
MCG Health, Inc.

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CONTENTS

2 NEWSBRIEFS

6 A STRONGER INSTITUTION
MCG President Daniel W. Rahn cites extraordinary progress in the face of unprecedented challenges.

16 THE BIG PICTURE
An MCG physician puts his classroom training to work for hurricane victims.

20 THE LONGEST THREE HOURS
The REACH program brings MCG expertise to rural stroke patients.

25 PIPELINE POWER
A federal grant expands programs aimed at interesting minorities in health careers.

27 PROFILES IN GIVING
Drs. Martha Bradshaw and Betty Pond

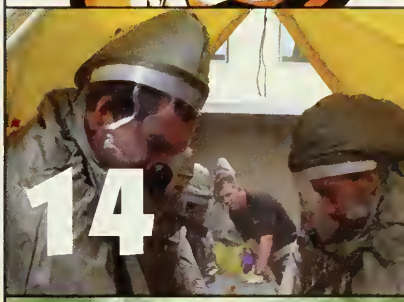
28 GIFT PLANNING

29 SCHOOL NEWS
School-by-school news for faculty, students and alumni.

53 REFLECTIONS
A flood of emotions

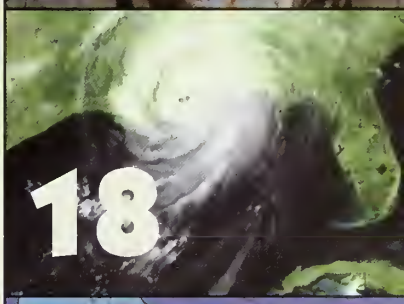
Branching Out

MCG's educational reach extends well beyond Augusta.



AT THE READY

Two new grants put Georgia on the cutting edge of disaster preparedness.



HOME AWAY FROM HOME

Hurricane-displaced students find a welcome mat at MCG.

A WORTHY ENDEAVOR

Mission work brings an MCG alumnus and his family to Central Asia.

WWW.MCG.EDU

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NEWS BRIEFS

Dr. Ellison Dies at 89

Dr. Robert Gordon Ellison, a stalwart of the Medical College of Georgia who helped revolutionize the field of cardiothoracic surgery, died Jan. 8 at age 89.

"Dr. Ellison's contributions as a member of the MCG faculty are incalculable," said MCG President Daniel W. Rahn. "He was directly responsible for many of MCG's most groundbreaking achievements, and he simply helped change the face of health care. He will be sorely missed."

Dr. Ellison earned a medical degree from MCG in 1943. After completing an internship and residency at MCG and a cardiopulmonary physiology fellowship at Bellevue Hospital in New York, he joined the MCG faculty in 1947. He went on to become chief of cardiothoracic surgery, retiring in 1987 as Charbonnier Professor Emeritus and Chief Emeritus.

He performed Georgia's first open-heart operation using bypass in 1956. He worked closely with his wife, Dr. Lois Taylor Ellison, who helped develop MCG's cardiopulmonary laboratory.

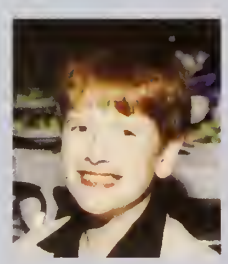
His awards included a School of Medicine Distinguished Alumnus Award, Society of Thoracic Surgeons Silver Platter, Medical Association of Georgia Hardman Cup, 2005 Lifetime Achievement Award from the Georgia Chapter of the American College of Cardiology and MCG's 2005 Vessel of Life Award (see page 47). The Robert G. Ellison, M.D. Symposium on Thoracic Surgery was established in his honor.

Survivors in addition to his wife include five sons, three of whom are MCG School of Medicine alumni, and nine grandchildren.

For more information about Dr. Ellison's career, visit www.mcg.edu/news/memorials/

Contributions may be made to MCG's Robert G. Ellison, M.D. Chair of Cardiothoracic Surgery, MCG Foundation, Inc., 919 15th Street, Augusta, Ga., 30912, or the Television Ministries of Trinity on the Hill United Methodist Church, 1330 Monte Sano Ave., Augusta, Ga., 30904.

Farewell, Friend



He was only 14, but Daniel Moretz's many accomplishments during his short life attest to a single goal: making life better for others. He died Nov. 16, but not before making an indelible mark at MCG. Daniel, the son of David and Julie Moretz and grandson of the late MCG President Emeritus William H. Moretz, was a featured Miracle Child on the Children's Miracle Network, a participant in the CMC groundbreaking in 1995, a charter member of the CMC Children's Advisory Council and the inspiration behind MCG's Children's Heart Program. The MCG community extends its most heartfelt condolences to Daniel's family.

President Reappointed to Council

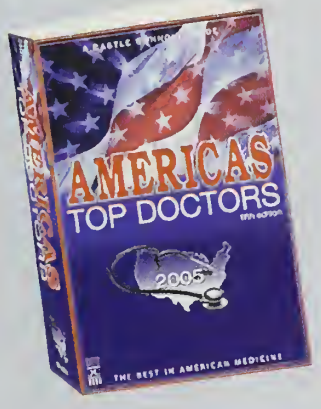
Georgia Gov. Sonny Perdue has reappointed MCG President Daniel W. Rahn as chair of the 27-member Health Strategies Council.

The council ensures that adequate health care services and facilities are developed efficiently and economically statewide. The council provides policy direction and health planning guidance to the Georgia Department of Community Health and the Division of Health Planning.

Dr. Rahn, who has served as chair since 2002, was appointed for four more years. He also chairs the State Commission on the Efficacy of the Certificate of Need Program and the University System of Georgia Health Professions Education Task Force. He is vice chair of the Georgia Medical Center Authority and a member of the board of directors of the Georgia Research Alliance, the Georgia Cancer Coalition, the Georgia Chamber of Commerce and the Georgia Health Decisions' Board of Trustees. Dr. Rahn chairs the Health Workforce Shortages Advisory Committee of the Association of Academic Health Centers and is former chair of the association's Council on Health Care Delivery and Infrastructure.

Doctors Lauded

Fifteen MCG physicians have been selected for inclusion in *America's Top Doctors*, a national patient reference guide published by Castle Connolly Medical Ltd. The book, which identifies the top 1 percent of physicians in the nation, helps patients find the top specialists in any field.



Dr. Robert J. Adams
Neurology

Dr. Walton W. Curl
Orthopaedics

Dr. David C. Hess
Neurology

Dr. Ronald W. Lewis
Urology

Dr. C. Lawrence Lutcher
Hematology

Dr. Anand P. Jillella
Hematology/Oncology

Dr. Bruce MacFadyen
General Surgery

Dr. Walter J. Moore
Rheumatology

Dr. Julian Nussbaum
Ophthalmology

Dr. Dennis R. Ownby
Pediatric Allergy and Immunology

Dr. Gregory N. Postma
Otolaryngology

Dr. Steve J. Schwab
Medicine

Dr. Kapil Sethi
Neurology

Dr. Sandra G.B. Sexson
Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

Dr. Robert A. Sorrentino
Cardiac Electrophysiology

TOP DOCS

Brain-Imaging Power

MCG Health System is the first in the Augusta area to acquire a state-of-the-art high-definition magnetic resonance scanner that provides highly detailed pictures of anatomy and pathology. While it can evaluate a wide range of patient conditions, its strength is in imaging the brain.

With magnet strength of 3.0 Tesla, the new system is the most powerful MR scanner available to patients today in routine clinical use.

MR is a diagnostic imaging tool that creates highly detailed views of every part of the body without using radiation. It helps clinicians diagnose disease in the brain and helps guide treatment and surgical planning. "This new MR scanner has advanced capabilities and new applications that are becoming more important in clinical decision-making," said Dr. James Rawson, chief of the radiology clinical service.

Couplet Care

MCG Health System recently held a "wedding" to celebrate the union of Postpartum and the Well Baby Nursery to provide couplet care.

Couplet care features one nurse caring for both mother and baby to offer continuity of care for both patients, to better partner with families, to give increased time and education to both mom and baby and to improve patient satisfaction.

"Our patient advisors specifically requested couplet care," said Nurse Manager Carrie Holloway. "We're pleased to be able to offer this unique type of care to our families."

Nurses Veena Patel and Frankie Parks cut the wedding cake at the marriage of Postpartum and the Well Baby Nursery.

A Family Affair

Hundreds of family and friends of MCG students spent Oct. 15 getting to know more about MCG during Family Day. The annual event included a reception with MCG administrators in the Student Center and activities for each school.

First-year medical student Tufik Assad and his classmates participate in the School of Medicine's White Coat Ceremony at Warren Baptist Church during Family Day. The ceremony signifies the students' entry into the clinical portion of their training.

MCG administrators greet students' family members and friends during Family Day.

Vision Victory

Dr. Bala Ambati, director of the MCG Cornea Service, recently performed the first implant of the new ReSTOR intraocular lens at MCG Health System, resulting in 20/20 vision for the patient. The implant, approved in April 2005 by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, ensures that cataract sufferers undergoing surgery can leave the operating room with good near, intermediate and distance vision. The lens can also eliminate the need for reading glasses or bifocals for patients over 45 who have trouble changing focus from distant to near.

The ReSTOR intraocular lens is a biconvex (convex on both sides) lens that is shaped using apodized diffraction. This process allows optimal management of light into the eye for increased depth of focus. Past lens implants used during cataract surgery could provide only distance vision.

Welcome, Board Members

Dr. J. Roy Rowland

Larry Benson

Dr. J. Roy Rowland of Laurens County and Larry Benson of Oconee County have been appointed by Gov. Sonny Perdue to join the Board of Directors of MCG Health, Inc. for three-year terms.

Dr. Rowland is director of utilization management of the Middle Georgia Community Mental Health Center. He served in the U.S. House of Representatives for 12 years and in the Georgia House of Representatives for six years. An honor graduate of MCG, he practiced family medicine in Dublin, Ga., for 28 years.

Mr. Benson is the chair and CEO of Benson's, Inc., which includes Benson's Bakery in Bogart, Ga. and several hotels in Athens, Ga. He is a graduate of the College of Business Administration at the University of Georgia, and is active in business and civic organizations in both Clarke and Oconee counties.

An Exceptional Teacher

Dr. Walter J. Moore, associate dean for graduate medical education, has received the Georgia Rural Health Association's 2005 Distinguished Educator Award.

Dr. Moore, professor of medicine, director of medical education for MCG Medical Center and chief of the Section of Rheumatology at MCG and the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Augusta, received the award during the association's annual meeting Oct. 2-4 in Jekyll Island, Ga.

"He is so exceptional in that he is not just there to do his job, he is there to truly help the residents and students," said Peggy Hensley Shull, program manager for the State Medical Education Board of Georgia and the Georgia Board for Physician Workforce, who nominated Dr. Moore. "Improving health care in Georgia is his ultimate goal," she said, noting most of the state's counties are medically underserved.

Dr. Moore was a key member of an advisory group on resident licensure to the Composite State Board of Medical Examiners. He serves on the governor's advisory board of the Georgia Chapter of the American College of Physicians and received the 2001 J. Willis Hurst Teaching Award from the college's Georgia chapter in recognition of outstanding bedside teaching.

Linear Precision

The Georgia Radiation Therapy Center recently treated its first patient using the latest linear accelerator technology, known as SmartBeam Intensity Modulated Radiation Therapy.

"The goal of radiation therapy is to provide the maximum dose to the tumor, while mitigating the effect on normal cells. IMRT allows us to do this, focusing radiation on the tumor site and sparing healthy tissue," said Dr. Chris Sheils, a radiation oncologist at the Georgia Radiation Therapy Center. "As a result, patients experience few, if any, side effects from the treatments."

"The new technology basically acts as a GPS [global positioning system] for the body," adds Shawn Vincent, administrative director of the MCG Cancer Center. "Treatment information, individualized to each patient, is uploaded into the machine and enables more precise, focused radiation delivery to the tumor."

Outstanding Epilepsy Care

The MCG Epilepsy Center has been named a Level 4 specialized epilepsy center by the National Association of Epilepsy Centers. A Level 4 center is a regional or national referral center that provides the more complex forms of intensive neurodiagnostic monitoring as well as more extensive medical, neuropsychological and psychosocial treatment. Such centers also offer a complete evaluation and offer a broad array of surgical procedures.

"Since 1977, the program has treated more than 30,000 patients from California and Bermuda to Korea," said epileptologist Dr. Ki Lee, the program's director. "As a national referral center, we treat patients with intractable epilepsy in which the seizures cannot be controlled simply by medication. Thanks to innovations in the treatment of this disorder, we are now able to end seizures, without side effects, in a majority of patients."

The MCG Epilepsy Center is one of only three in the state. It is the **only** epilepsy center in Georgia and South Carolina to earn this designation.

Optimizing Identity Protection

The **MCG Identity Protection Initiative** has yielded 11 security-enhancing measures.

The initiative, implemented last year to address security concerns about documents and systems containing sensitive personal information, was initially intended to reduce the use of the Social Security number as a primary identifier. But it soon expanded to address a more extensive array of personal information, according to IPI Project Lead Deb Barshafsky, vice president for decision support.

The measures range from distributing privacy reminder posters throughout campus to more complex projects such as analyzing online systems for unnecessary personal information.

A copy of the IPI report is available at www.mcg.edu/ipi.

"A Stronger Institution"

President Cites Extraordinary Progress in Face of Unprecedented Challenges

Editor's note: For the full text of President Daniel W. Rahn's 2005 State of the University Address, visit http://www.mcg.edu/admin/state2005.asp.

The Medical College of Georgia has transformed so dramatically in the past four years that "I can only imagine what this campus will be like five years from now if we continue to work together to advance the mission of Georgia's health sciences university," said MCG President Daniel W. Rahn during his 2005 State of the University Address Sept. 22.

I will never step away from my commitment to provide maximum support of faculty, staff and students to accomplish the good work of the Medical College of Georgia.

–President Daniel W. Rahn

Since 2001, MCG has nearly doubled its research funding, implemented seven new educational programs, recruited exceptional faculty members, constructed several new buildings, seen a 20 percent increase in student applications and upgraded its clinical care, to cite just a few accomplishments, President Rahn said.

a more dynamic institution

Those accomplishments are particularly noteworthy, he said, in light of unprecedented challenges such as budget cuts, economic downturns and ever-rising health care costs. "The challenges we faced in 2001 were formidable," President Rahn said. "At present, our state appropriation represents 25 percent of our core operating budget. But by working with dedication and focus, we've been able to leverage that investment to create great returns for the citizens of the state. For every dollar the state invests in MCG, we generate three."

The success, he said, lies in focus.

"In [my administration's] earliest planning sessions, we articulated a vision for the Medical College of Georgia—a shared institutional desire to become one of the nation's premier health sciences universities," President Rahn said. "And every day over the past four years, we've taken another step in that direction. We've navigated our way through choppy seas to become a better institution, a stronger institution, a more dynamic institution—an institution better positioned to make an extraordinary impact on the health of the people of this state and nation."

That focus is apparent in every aspect of MCG's mission. For instance, "our research enterprise is on an upward trajectory due to our unwavering commitment to create a thriving and productive environment for discovery, and due to our commitment to be among the best in the world in our chosen areas of focus," President Rahn said.

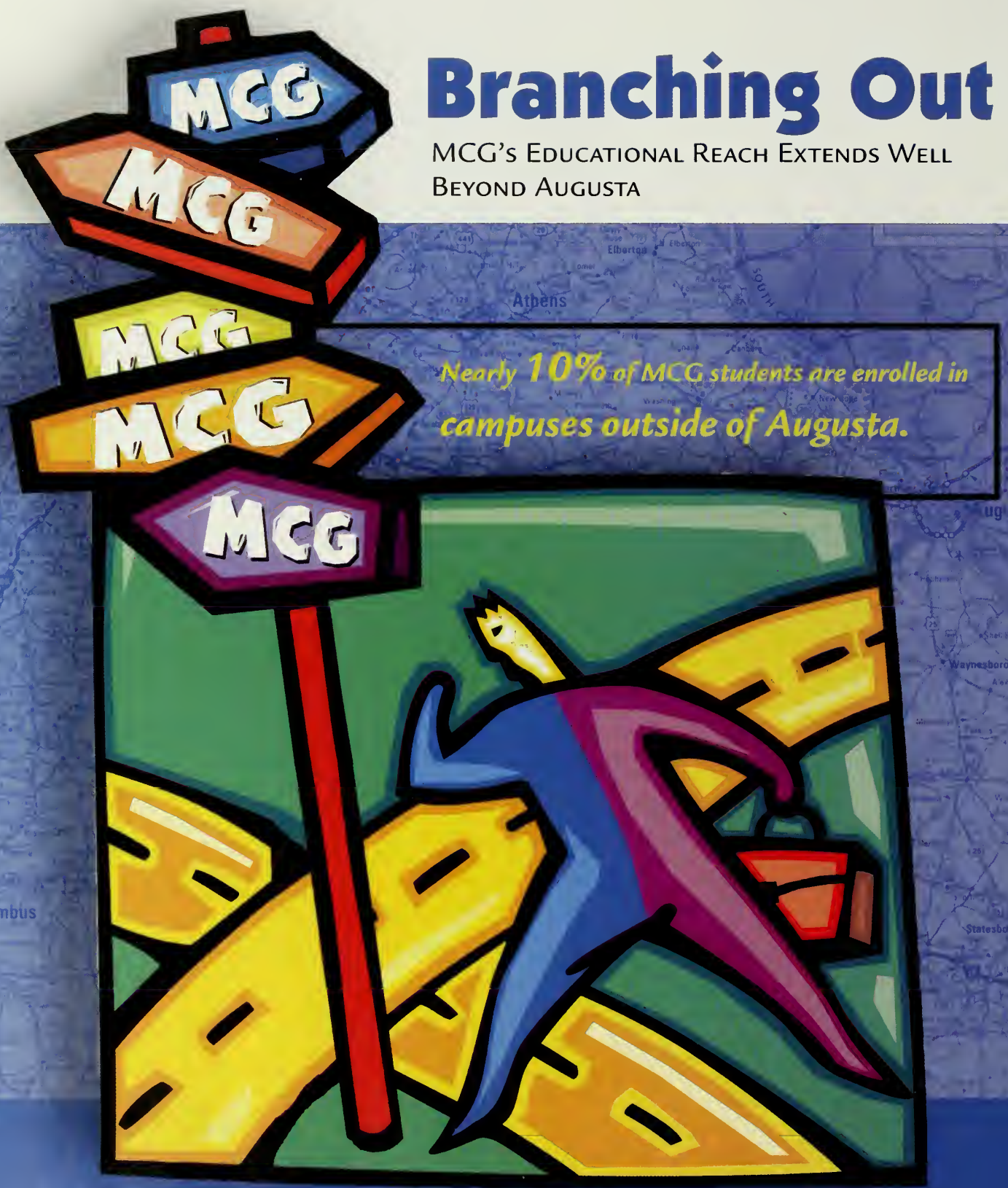
He also noted achievements in areas including education, clinical care and facilities. "Essentially, MCG is rebuilding the entire campus, either by erecting new structures or by renovating existing space."

The constant change that has characterized the past four years is here to stay, he said. "We'll always be in state of flux, and we must be nimble enough to make adjustments along the way."

The past four years, he said, have convinced him that MCG can weather all challenges. "Whatever our institutional pursuits," he said, "I will never step away from my commitment to provide maximum support of faculty, staff and students to accomplish the good work of the Medical College of Georgia. Because while the institution has accomplished a lot, we must remember that we *are* the institution." ⊷

Branching Out

MCG's Educational Reach Extends Well Beyond Augusta



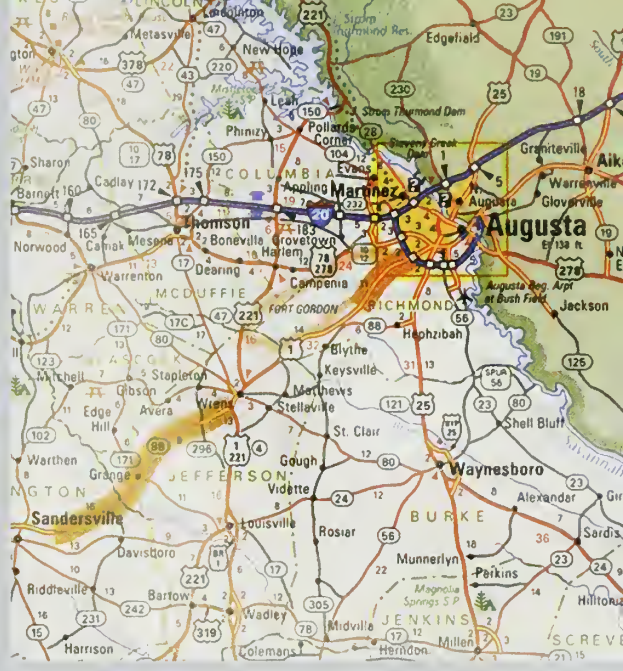
Nearly 10% of MCG students are enrolled in campuses outside of Augusta.

For more information on MCG's impact across the state, visit http://www.iris.mcg.edu/impact/

It's an interesting dilemma, particularly in the current economy:

Too many jobs? Too few workers?

As America's population grows and grays, that's the forecast in the health care arena. The U.S. Department of Labor predicts 3 million new health care jobs by 2010. As Georgia's only public health sciences university, the Medical College of Georgia is working to meet those needs of tomorrow by expanding the workforce of today.



For years now, MCG has used resources such as distance-learning, the Internet and satellite campuses to extend its reach. Never has that commitment been stronger than it is today. This year, 9.5 percent of MCG students are enrolled in classrooms outside of Augusta. At MCG campuses in Athens, Columbus, Barnesville and Gwinnett County, students tune in to real-time, distance-learning lectures from faculty members in Augusta. Meanwhile, technology such as the Tegrity WebLearner system and Web CT allows students in other time zones to replay lectures at their convenience.

"What we are learning is that we are able to reach out to a different type of student," said Becky Stone, education program specialist for biomedical and radiological technologies. "We're seeing more of an adult student who is coming into these programs from another profession and reinventing his career, maybe because of economic reasons."

By partnering with accredited hospitals and clinical sites in the state's smallest communities, MCG is able to supplement curricula with workplace experience.

"Our program has grown; we now have clinical sites where students receive training as far as Washington state," said Ms. Stone. For instance, MCG's nuclear medical technology program began in 2001 with four students. By this spring, 23 students will have graduated from the program, having earned their degrees in Augusta, Athens, Columbus and Atlanta.

"We have really great communication and rapport with our sites, and we monitor all the work the students complete online," Ms. Stone said.

Likewise, community partnerships enable MCG medical students and physician assistant students to choose clinical rotation sites in nearly every county of the state. During this four- to six-week specialty training, students learn firsthand about rural communities as they treat typically underserved regions. The Department of Physician Assistant has over 300 affiliation agreements in five states and the School of Medicine has nearly 200 community-based faculty members across Georgia who make these opportunities possible.

Spending time training in rural areas often leads students back to these areas to begin their own practices. The MCG School of Allied Health Sciences program at Columbus State University is a prime example.

Since 1999, the Department of Occupational Therapy has supplemented its on-campus program with a distance-education program in Columbus. Targeted enrollment for the a bachelor of science degree in occupational therapy for the first year was 10 students and 11 enrolled on the Columbus State University campus. By fall 2002, class size exceeded expectations with the enrollment of 15 students.

Faculty at the Augusta and Columbus campuses teach courses using two-way interactive technology and clinical laboratories. Since 2003, a master of health sciences degree has been offered on both campuses.

"Eighty to 90 percent [of the graduates] stay in the area serving health care needs," said Rob McCallister, program director. "As the number of occupational therapists in the region grows, the variety of services is also enhanced. The graduates of this program are positively impacting the quality of care offered in the rural southwest Georgia area."

But formal degree programs only scratch the surface of MCG's statewide impact. The university has been tremendously creative in extending its reach, often with the enthusiastic help of health care providers throughout the state. Following are just four examples:

'A Broader Experience'

1,531 alumni
live and work in the Blue Ridge AHEC region

For a pediatric cardiologist who enjoys teaching, Dr. Josh Donner says he has the best of both worlds. At the Harbin Clinic in Rome, Ga., he combines patient care with one-on-one time with the next generation of physicians.

"I'm lucky," said the 1990 MCG alumnus. "I get to teach, which I love to do, but I don't have to worry about research or publishing, things I've never enjoyed."

Since 1997, the Macon native has donated roughly 20 hours a week leading MCG students on pediatrics rotations.

"Community-based faculty really enjoy what they do and have a strong desire to teach, but given their location, they are unable to do so at a medical school," said Erin Mundy, medical clerkship coordinator for Georgia's Area Health Education Centers. "One of the biggest concerns for a new community-based faculty member is that a student is going to slow him down. That concern is valid and we work to make sure that this doesn't happen."

To ensure faculty are used efficiently and effectively, Ms. Mundy and her colleagues work with each clerkship site to offer faculty-development programs on topics such as working a student into a busy practice and teaching tips for the bedside.

"Rotations offer the students exposure to medicine that they would not get by staying in the academic medical center environment. (Rome) is a good place to do a general pediatric medical rotation because you get to be exposed to pediatrics in a smaller community and you get to see outpatient, inpatient and some subspecialty pediatrics. The students get a pretty well-rounded rotation."
– Dr. Josh Donner

Dr. Josh Donner with third-year medical student Dane Iams

Denise Wright

For Dr. Donner, the clerkship program is a mutually beneficial arrangement. He gets an extra set of hands and eyes several times a year as, one by one, a dozen physician assistant and medical students come through his clinic. Meanwhile, students gain five to six weeks' exposure to different practice styles and individual instruction.

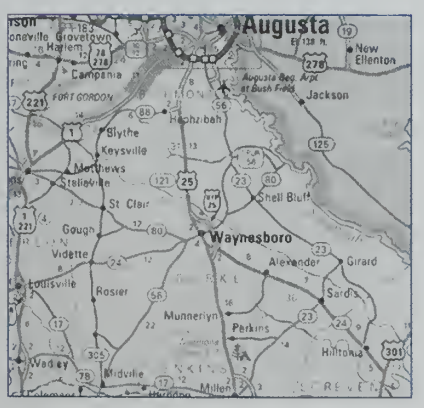
"When I was in medical school, our rotations were in Augusta and most were in an inpatient setting," he said. "We had a lot of other students and residents doing the rotation, so the hands-on experience was very limited and the degree of teaching we received from the residents was very limited. We didn't get exposed to pediatricians outside of the academic setting, so students have a much broader experience now."

Like his colleagues across Georgia, Dr. Donner takes students under his wing to benefit the health care craft, not the pocketbook. As a second-generation MCG alumnus (his father is Dr. Robert Donner, '58) who married a MCG School of Nursing alumna (Kris Palazzolo, '90), Dr. Donner has a family heritage at MCG that he enjoys supporting by teaching MCG students.

"I also do this because it's fun to teach general pediatrics and pediatric cardiology and I think it's a fun way to learn," he said. "Rotations offer the students exposure to medicine that they would not get by staying in the academic medical center environment. (Rome) is a good place to do a general pediatric medical rotation because you get to be exposed to pediatrics in a smaller community and you get to see outpatient, inpatient and some subspecialty pediatrics. The students get a pretty well-rounded rotation."

'What We're Here For'

***1,730 alumni** live and work in the Magnolia Coastlands AHEC region*



For Dr. Mark J. Gresham, assistant clinical professor of obstetrics and gynecology, teaching MCG students is not an obligation – it's a time-honored tradition.

"Physicians should always give back because it's a part of the profession," said Dr. Gresham, a 1993 MCG graduate.

Two years after opening his private practice, Dr. Gresham invited the first MCG students to his Waynesboro, Ga. office. Since 2001, he has mentored at least one medical student every six weeks, and has inspired several students to pursue careers in obstetrics and gynecology.

"Malpractice is a real issue in ob-gyn, and most people make up their minds before they give it a try. Once they see what we do and how much fun we have – providing primary care and performing surgery – they can see that it's the best of both worlds," he said.

With his office in a rural area, students also witness issues associated with treating low-income patients. Dr. Gresham considers access to care his office's biggest obstacle.

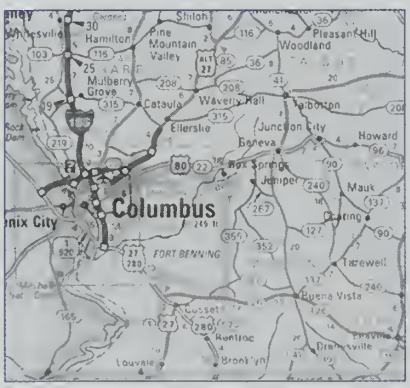
"The problem is getting [the patients] here," he said. "This is poverty on top of poverty for generations. The education level is low, the literacy level is low. But part of what we have to do is take care of these people."

In May 2004, senior medical students honored Dr. Gresham with the Ob-Gyn Educator of the Year Award. He estimated that at least 50 percent of his trainees from that year are pursuing careers in ob-gyn.

"If someone told me tomorrow that I couldn't practice medicine, I don't know what I'd do," Dr. Gresham said, then paused. "Actually, I *do* know what I'd do – I'd be a teacher."

COLUMBUS

1,716 alumni
live and work in the Three Rivers AHEC region



'They Really Get It'

For students like Sarah Brown, a health care career would never have been an option if MCG had not expanded its teaching mission outside of Augusta.

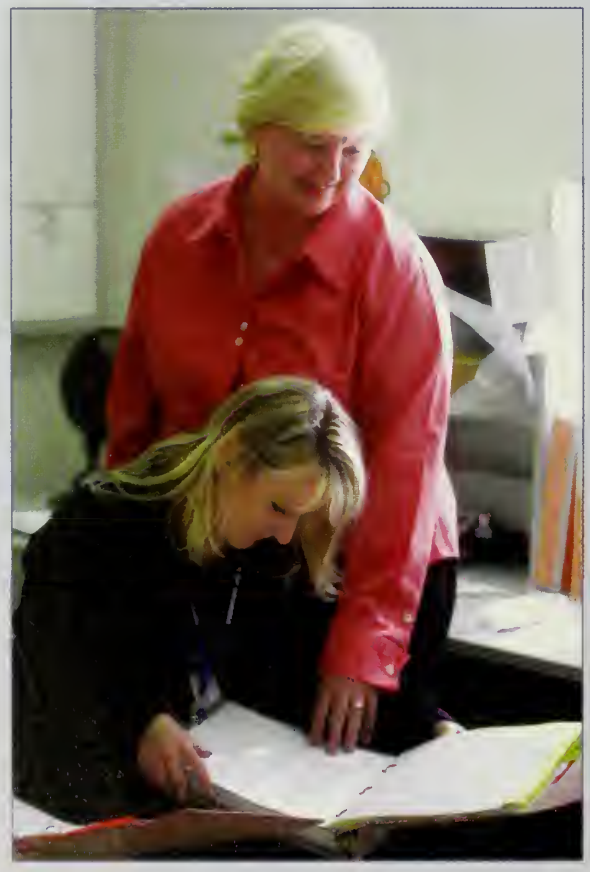
In 1999, a friend told her MCG had begun a bachelor's degree program in occupational therapy at Columbus State University. The then 53-year-old teacher, wife and mother of three started to see a lifelong dream take shape. After witnessing the care her mother received many years ago from an occupational therapist, Ms. Brown wanted to be a part of the profession. She investigated programs in surrounding areas before MCG's program opened, but costs were prohibitive.

"MCG was much more affordable," she said. "All my life, I had wanted to be a therapist. I thought, 'If I don't do this now, I won't do it.' So I came home and told my husband I was going to quit my job and go back to school. Thanks to MCG, I was able to get the education I wanted and still stay at home."

With two children in college at the time, the decision was difficult financially and emotionally. But with overwhelming family support, she persevered.

"It was tough, but it was something I had always wanted to do, so I kept at it," she said. "I found my brain still worked after all those years out of school, although a whole lot slower than I remembered it did."

In 2001, Ms. Brown received a bachelor's degree in occupational therapy from MCG's Columbus campus. Today, she works at Columbus' Oak Manor, the largest privately owned nursing home east of the Mississippi River.



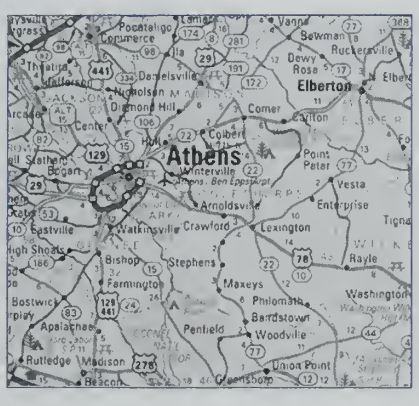
Sarah Brown teaches field work.

"If you are doing this right, you become very close to your patients," she said. "They become part of your family and it hurts to lose them. But it really is a rewarding career. I get way more from my patients than they ever get from me."

Her new profession allows her to combine strengths as a teacher with compassion for humanity. She's teaching patients skills for living – how to dress, bathe and groom themselves after an injury or illness. She also teaches OT students as they complete up to 12 weeks of field work at Oak Manor.

"I've always felt I can teach anybody anything," she said. "You just have to find the best way to reach each different personality. I really believe in letting the students get as much hands-on experience as possible. That way, when a disease is brought up in the classroom, they understand it and can really get it."

5,595 alumni
live and work in the Foothills AHEC region



'It's a Calling'

Deb Williams isn't so much a mentor as someone who desperately needs a few extra sets of hands. If the people attached to those hands benefit from the experience – well then, so much the better.

Ms. Williams is the director and clinic operations manager of the Athens Nurses Clinic in Athens, Ga. The non-profit clinic, funded by grants and the Athens Regional Indigent Care Fund, provides free primary and episodic treatment for approximately 30 to 35 patients a day, most of whom are impoverished and uninsured. Ms. Williams has a master's degree in nursing and oversees a staff of nurse practitioners. Providing extra hands are nursing students, including those from MCG's Athens campus, whose service supplements their clinical training. Ms. Williams supervises their work.

"Over half our patients have diabetes or hypertension," said Ms. Williams, noting that such conditions often lead to life-threatening and disabling complications without ongoing care.

The clinic is tidy, clean and cheerful, with colorful posters on the walls offering tips for a healthy lifestyle. But most striking about the environment is an almost palpable sense of compassion and support for everyone who walks through the door.

On a bright, sunny day in October, Sadie Clark was one of those people.

"The people are real friendly and listen to everything you have to say," said Ms. Clark, a 56-year-old whose hypertension and borderline diabetes had been diagnosed at the clinic a few months earlier. Since then, she gets better news with every monthly visit.

"I stopped smoking and drinking beer after my first visit to the clinic; I did that in one day," she said. "I started eating right – no salt, no pork, lots of fruits and vegetables. The weight just started coming off."

And then some. During this clinic visit, MCG nursing student Jennifer Raynor, a senior from Fitzgerald, Ga., was on hand to monitor Ms. Clark's progress. With an easy smile and light conversation, she tested Ms. Clark's blood sugar level, heart rate, blood pressure and weight.

"You weigh 151 – down three pounds from last month," Ms. Raynor told the patient.

And the news kept getting better: "Your blood pressure is well under control," Ms. Williams told Ms. Clark after monitoring the nursing student's work and perusing the data she compiled. "And your blood sugar is normal."

Ms. Clark was so pleased that she walked up and down the halls of the clinic, sharing the good news with the staff she's come to know by name.

"Nobody can believe how good your blood pressure is," one staff member told her, beaming.

Ms. Raynor knows not every patient will be as compliant and cooperative as Ms. Clark, but she feels her education – including this clinical experience – is preparing her well for every challenge. She hopes to earn a master's degree in nursing after completing her baccalaureate education. She wants to work in a children's hospital.

"My mother had cancer when I was younger, so I learned the importance of nursing firsthand," she said. "I feel it's a calling." ➸

Ellen Gladden Jones with Christine Hurley Deriso and Kim Miller

ENNIFER RAYNOR TREATS SADIE CLARK

At the Ready

Grants Put Georgia on Cutting Edge of Disaster Preparedness

MCG Center for Operational Medicine conducts simulated emergency training.

It's an ambitious program that should make Georgia the best-prepared state in the nation for disaster.

Armed with two new grants, the Medical College of Georgia Center of Operational Medicine will drive an initiative to "train up" 24,000 physicians, nurses, physician assistants, paramedics, emergency medical technicians, firefighters, police, hospital administrators and more across the state over the next three years.

"Hurricane Katrina has been a horrific reminder that the potential for all types of disaster will not go away and we need to be ready," said Dr. Phillip Coule, center director.

In September, he learned the Georgia Department of Human Resources Hospital Bioterrorism Program Office had awarded MCG a grant to help do just that: a $398,000, one-year grant to teach the National Disaster Life Support™ courses the university helped develop across the state's eight health districts.

A few weeks later, the center got word of a $4.5 million, three-year grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for bioterrorism training and curriculum development that dramatically expands the scope of training.

"What this really allows us to do is take what we have started with the state grant and take it to completion," said Dr. Richard Schwartz, chair of the MCG Department of Emergency Medicine.

"This is a massive competitive grant victory, not just for MCG, but for the entire (Central Savannah River Area)," U.S. Rep. Charlie Norwood said in announcing the grant. "It reinforces the foundation we're building here in the greater Augusta area as a national brain trust for homeland defense and security. Coupled with the funding victories last year for the Gordon Regional and Security Operations Center at Fort Gordon, this grant to MCG to develop bioterrorism training and curricula for America's first responders puts this area at the forefront of national homeland security expertise."

Long before Sept. 11, 2001 brought the horrific reality of manmade disaster center stage, MCG faculty and staff were working with colleagues at the University of Georgia, the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas, the University of Texas at Houston School of Public Health and the American Medical Association to develop the National Disaster Life Support™ courses.

Today the courses, much like Advanced Cardiac Life Support and Advanced Trauma Life Support, are becoming the national training standard for health care providers who might treat victims of natural or manmade disasters. "We have really tried to focus on all-hazards because the next major disaster probably is not going to be the same as the last," Dr. Schwartz said of course content.

The course lineup includes Core Disaster Life Support™, a four-hour awareness course focusing on medical first responders, but also helpful to firefighters, hospital administrators and security personnel, as well as other non-medical providers who likely would have a role in managing a major disaster. CDLS – Decontamination™ is an eight-hour supplement during which primarily non-medical, hospital-based personnel don protective gear and set up decontamination shelters. As the name implies, Basic Disaster Life Support™ focuses on giving hospital-based and frontline medical providers the essentials of disaster management, including natural disasters such as tsunamis and hurricanes as well as manmade explosions and nuclear attacks, that establishes a common knowledge and language. Advanced Disaster Life Support™ expands that base and gives students a day of hands-on practice triaging large numbers of patients and using high-end human simulators to recognize and treat chemical and biological exposures.

To date the courses have been taught to about 50,000 students in nearly 40 states, including parts of the Gulf Coast devastated by Hurricane Katrina, Dr. Coule said.

The newest grants will enable the center to focus on its own homeland. The federal grant also will help broaden the impact in Georgia by finalizing development of a one-hour introductory course that is understandable and useful to essentially every citizen.

The newest course, still being fine-tuned, covers what these doctors, who focus much of their considerable energy on disaster preparedness, call the disaster paradigm. "It goes through detection of a disaster, general principles of an incident management system, scene safety and security issues, assessing hazards, what kind of support is needed for a response, triage and treatment of patients and recovery," Dr. Schwartz said.

The fact that the course takes just an hour and has such broad application fills a hole in their course lineup. "Really, the mass casualty course will have applicability to every individual, teachers with responsibility for children, other people involved in leadership roles in the community, almost any citizen who may be involved, just so they can have a better understanding of the potential hazards that may be involved with a disaster and the response to a disaster. There have been instances when well-meaning personnel have gone in trying to help and have become casualties themselves. We want people to be aware of those types of issues."

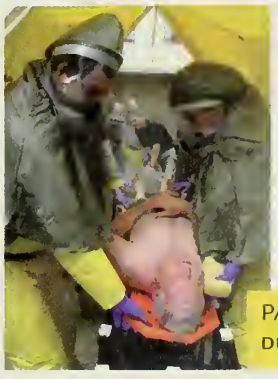
He hopes the new course will also inspire further training because, despite the visible disasters that have marked the last five years, the reality of busy daily life means that more training, even for medical professionals, is asking a lot.

They are working to make all the courses as accessible as possible, with distance learning and even Web-based versions of the classes when possible. The AMA and Pearson Education are finalizing a high-end, interactive distance-learning version of the CDLS™ course.

To further enhance training, the federal grant will enable establishment of NDLS™ training centers at Emory University, a collaborative project between the Department of Emergency Medicine and the School of Public Health, and at the University of Georgia, long-time collaborator on course development.

MCG also will work with Georgia Statewide Area Health Education Centers, a collaborative effort of MCG and the Mercer University School of Medicine to improve the supply and distribution of health professionals in underserved areas of the state, to help ensure disaster training covers the entire state. ➸

Toni Baker



PARTICIPANTS DON PROTECTIVE GEAR DURING A SIMULATED EMERGENCY

The Big Picture

Physician Puts Classroom Training to Work for Hurricane Victims

Dr. Jeffrey D. Orledge

A busy Saturday night in the emergency room pales to standing in the New Orleans Airport with thousands of potential patients.

It's not just the volume of patients that is different, but also how medicine must be practiced when the usual rules are cast aside along with normal life.

Dr. Jeffrey D. Orledge probably felt as well-prepared as anyone could trying to treat Hurricane Katrina victims. The Medical College of Georgia emergency medicine physician has put himself in the path of disasters for years, working at various points as a volunteer firefighter, emergency medical technician, volunteer medical director for two emergency medical services programs and a member of a Pennsylvania Urban Search and Rescue Team in the aftermath of 9-11.

He was in New Orleans this time as deputy commander of Georgia 4 Disaster Medical Assistance Team, a Federal Emergency Management Agency-sanctioned team in development that may be called for backup as emergencies unfold outside its region.

Also this time, he had nearly two years under his belt teaching courses MCG helped design to impose order amid chaos. The National Disaster Life Support™ courses offer a broad approach to disaster management.

The courses provide a disaster checklist, including detection, incident command, scene safety and security, support, triage, evacuation and recovery. "It helps people when they are involved in a situation understand the big picture a little bit better," Dr. Orledge said.

Nothing is more important than knowing who is in charge. Incident command depends on the disaster and the location. In New York City, Mayor Rudy Guiliani coordinated diverse disaster efforts. In the New Orleans airport where Dr. Orledge volunteered, FEMA was in charge. In some situations and cities, it might be the local fire or police chief. Participants in MCG's disaster courses hash through different scenarios, working through the disaster paradigm.

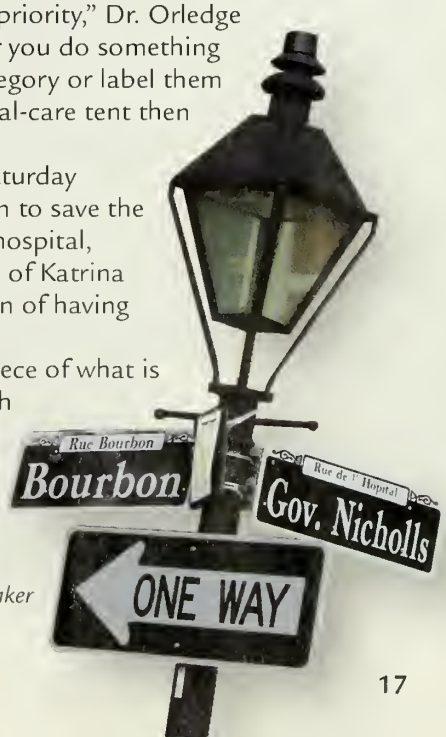
"The mass triage that we teach worked perfectly [after Hurricane Katrina]," he said. First, those who can walk are asked to group together. Those who cannot walk but can move are then identified, which leaves those who are not moving.

"People who are not moving are the first priority," Dr. Orledge said. "You go and quickly assess them. Either you do something simple to help them move up to the next category or label them as 'expectant.'" Physicians manning the critical-care tent then make treatment decisions.

Back in the busy emergency room on a Saturday night, extraordinary measures would be taken to save the most critically ill. But in a makeshift airport hospital, every effort is extraordinary. In the aftermath of Katrina and 9-11, Dr. Orledge has seen the frustration of having limited resources to handle massive needs.

"You as the provider only see your little piece of what is going on, and the whole scope is much, much bigger. It's a different mindset," he said. "You have to rely on the incident command structure. Once you realize where you fit in, the frustrations aren't so bad." ⊷

Toni Baker



Hurricane-Displaced Students Find Home at MCG

Home Away

Stranded in Georgia, two hurricane evacuees found one thing worth salvaging: their education.

Irfan Ali and Jason Lucas, physiology students at the Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center in New Orleans, recouped their fall semester by studying at MCG.

"MCG came through for me by letting me fall into class with other students," Mr. Lucas said. "Everyone went above and beyond to get us into class and get us started."

He and Mr. Ali are among at least four students displaced from their home institutions, LSU HSC and Tulane University, who spent their fall semester in the MCG School of Graduate Studies. Dean Gretchen Caughman said the school did everything possible to prevent significant breaks in their education.

For Mr. Lucas, an alumnus of MCG's respiratory therapy and physician assistant programs, the evacuation was a homecoming. He had just moved to New Orleans from Augusta, where he worked as a physician assistant in cardiothoracic surgery. He left MCG to pursue his doctorate in physiology at LSU HSC, but planned to visit Augusta frequently to see his wife, Julie Lucas, who is completing her MCG degree in nursing anesthesia. Unfortunately for Jason, the hurricane made his first trek home a significant challenge.

"We didn't know where the storm was going to hit. By the time we realized it was coming so close, the interstate was gridlocked," he said.

With his options dwindling, Mr. Lucas chose to ride out the storm at his in-laws' house, on the north shore of Lake Pontchartrain. He watched helplessly as the houses on either side were demolished by wind and debris.

"When the storm came through, the trees and rain were parallel to the river," he said. "The devastation that we witnessed was absolutely heartbreaking."

After three days with minimal supplies, he realized he would have to cut his way out of the tree-strewn streets to reach his wife in Augusta.

"Until I left that Wednesday, I had no way to let her know I was alive," he said.

Jason Lucas (left) and Irfan Ali

A Plethora of Helping Hands

Kelly Phelps

Many members of the MCG community rushed to aid hurricane victims in the aftermath of this fall's devastating storms.

For instance, Drs. Angela Bulloch and Charles Poole, both 2003 School of Dentistry graduates, coincidentally crossed paths at a mobile dental care unit dispatched to Waveland, Miss., to assist hurricane victims. Dr. Bulloch serves in the U.S. Public Health Service in Winslow, Ariz., and was temporarily assigned to the disaster area. Dr. Poole, in private practice at Colony Square Dental Associates in Atlanta, was a weekend volunteer.

Amy Vinson

Here at home, medical students Kelly Phelps and Amy Vinson recruited dozens of their classmates to treat some 1,000 Hurricane Katrina evacuees at Augusta's May Park Community Center. The volunteerism was coordinated by the St. Vincent DePaul Health Clinic.

from Home

Safely in Georgia, Mr. Lucas moved into the apartment his wife shared with a classmate. After covering the basics, such as obtaining a new wardrobe, he set his sights on recovering the semester he had just begun. He contacted Dr. Kathleen McDonough, assistant dean of graduate studies at LSU HSC, and learned the physiology program was conducting classes at LSU's main campus in Baton Rouge.

"With the influx of people, students were having a lot of trouble finding housing there. In the meantime, I had housing here," he said.

Mr. Lucas sought the advice of a former supervisor, Dr. James St. Louis, an MCG pediatric cardiothoracic surgeon, who referred him to Dr. John Catravas, director of the MCG Vascular Biology Center. Dr. Catravas contacted Dr. Caughman, who made arrangements to accommodate him.

"With all my experience and interactions at MCG, this is my first experience with the graduate school," Mr. Lucas said. "I have nothing but good things to say about the treatment I've received."

The journey to MCG was less predictable for Mr. Ali, a native of St. Louis. He regularly visits his girlfriend in Tifton, Ga., and happened to be there when Hurricane Katrina struck. With limited options, Mr. Ali, who is pursuing a dual degree in physiology and medicine, opted to volunteer health services at a hospital in Baton Rouge. The day before his departure, he got a call from Dr. Cuihua Xiang, assistant professor of anesthesiology, physiology and surgery at LSU HSC, and Dr. William Chilian, head of the LSU HSC Department of Physiology.

"I told them I was planning to head back and they told me no," Mr. Ali said. "They suggested I come to MCG."

He learned that Dr. Chilian also found refuge in Georgia. Dr. Chilian was staying with MCG researcher David Stepp, with whom he worked at the Medical College of Wisconsin. With much of his research destroyed by the flood, Dr. Catravas offered Dr. Chilian lab space and equipment. Dr. Chilian moved some of his research to MCG, and encouraged Mr. Ali to conduct his dissertation research there.

MANDY O'LEARY, STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT FOR THE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AT LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER, IS A MEDICAL RESIDENT WHO IS ABLE TO CONTINUE HER TRAINING UNINTERRUPTED, THANKS TO MCG. MS. O'LEARY IS COMPLETING NEUROLOGY AND HEMATOLOGY/ONCOLOGY ROTATIONS. SHE WAS AT MCG COMPLETING A RESIDENCY WHEN HURRICANE KATRINA STRUCK; ADMINISTRATORS HASTILY ARRANGED THE OTHER ROTATIONS TO ALLOW HER TO EXTEND HER STAY. "I CANNOT TELL YOU HOW LUCKY I AM TO HAVE COME THROUGH THIS WITH MY FAMILY AND POSSESSIONS INTACT," SHE SAID.

Just a year and a half from obtaining his doctorate, Mr. Ali says he feels fortunate his transition was so convenient. "Only a handful of schools do the research I do, and MCG happens to be one of them," he said.

Both men are conducting research using Dr. Chilian's lab. Mr. Lucas says he is grateful for the opportunity to work with Dr. Chilian, an acclaimed coronary researcher.

The students plan to return to LSU HSC as soon as they can. They both hypothesize about the future of the city, and are eager to share their views.

"I'll go back to New Orleans just on principle. But it's disheartening... and it's sad," Mr. Ali said. "I'm afraid it will be really different, not as demographically diverse. I really enjoyed the town as it was."

Mr. Lucas agrees, but is more hopeful. "A handful of people won't be able to move back, which is unfortunate, but that isn't all of New Orleans," he said. "The city has this Mardi Gras spirit that will persevere." ➸

Kim Miller

REACH Program Brings MCG Expertise to Rural Stroke Patients

When 46-year-old Curtis Daniel went to bed, it had been a day like any other ... nothing special or out of the ordinary.

That is, until he awoke at 3:15 a.m., violently coughing and struggling to breathe against the invisible noose around his neck. Mr. Daniel made his way to the bathroom, and his wife, Amanda, rolled over and went back to sleep.

Curtis Daniel

REACH=Remote Evaluation of Acute IsCHemic Stroke

But the coughing grew more violent, again waking Mrs. Daniel. He mumbled that he was strangling, but coughed up whatever was in his throat, so Mrs. Daniel again rolled over. "Sometimes, he coughs at night," she explained. "I really didn't know what was going on."

As Mrs. Daniel once again dozed off, Mr. Daniel slipped into a pair of shorts and went out to the front porch for a bit of fresh air. About 10 minutes later, Mrs. Daniel found him, glassy-eyed with the left side of his face drawn and his left hand hanging limp between his legs.

She asked if he could move his left arm. "He shrugged his shoulder and mumbled words I couldn't understand," Mrs. Daniel said. "I asked again. This time, he gave me a look that said, 'I already did what you asked. Why are you asking again?' That's when I tried to get him on his feet, but his left leg collapsed."

Mrs. Daniel called for an ambulance. "I thought it might be a stroke," she said. "I have uncles on both sides of my family who have had strokes, and my mother is a nurse who works with stroke rehab patients, so I kind of know the signs."

Emergency medical technicians confirmed her suspicion when they reached the Daniels' home minutes later.

Mr. Daniel's blood pressure soared to 208/100 during the 12-mile drive from their Harrison, Ga., home to Washington County Regional Medical Center in Sandersville, Ga. By the time they arrived, Dr. David Hess, MCG Health System's chief of neurology, was consulting via a secure webcam feed. The REACH program was ready to save another life.

REACH (Remote Evaluation of Acute IsCHemic Stroke) was launched in early 2003 to enable MCG neurologists to consult on rural stroke cases 24/7. The neurologists help medical professionals administer tPA, a clot-busting drug that can mitigate the debilitating effects of a stroke if given within three hours. MCG physicians can actually see patients via a secure feed, review the CT scan online, evaluate physical signs and symptoms, download information regarding medical history from the participating hospital and send back instructions.

"Mr. Daniel had severe weakness of his left face, arm and leg and appeared to have suffered a large stroke in the distribution of his right middle cerebral artery," said Dr. Hess. "I rated him as having 15 points on the National Institute of Health Stroke Score. This corresponds to a fairly severe stroke. Washington County staff did an excellent job of presenting him to me and getting the CT scan done quickly. I felt he was a good candidate for tPA and we decided to treat him. We also ordered the helicopter to fly out to Washington County right away, as patients with strokes this large can deteriorate quickly."

Timing, he stressed, is everything.

"For stroke patients, a mere three-hour window exists during which we can administer tPA. Dealing with this time constraint has been a struggle for many rural hospitals. That's what makes REACH such an important disability-prevention program."

Once tPA was administered, Mr. Daniel was airlifted to MCG Medical Center, where Dr. Hess monitored his progress. The very next day, less than 24 hours after suffering a stroke, Mr. Daniel was walking by himself. Less than a week into his hospitalization, Mr. Daniel's speech and mobility were functional.

"I expect him to make a full recovery," said Dr. Hess, adding with a smile, "as long as he follows doctors' advice."

Mrs. Daniel credits the REACH program with saving her husband's life. "It was three hours between the time that Curtis woke up and we arrived at MCG via helicopter," she said. "Those were the longest three hours of our lives. We are so grateful for the REACH program. I don't believe they would have been able to save him without it."

REACH is working with several rural hospitals to extend the program into South Carolina. Health organizations from North Carolina, Florida and Montana also have expressed interest following a REACH presentation at an American Heart Association meeting, so Dr. Hess anticipates continued expansion.

Deborah Humphrey

Georgia REACH Partners

Washington County Regional Medical Center
Sandersville

McDuffie Regional Hospital
Thomson

Emanuel County Hospital
Swainsboro

Jenkins County Hospital
Millen

Wills Memorial Hospital
Washington

Morgan Memorial Hospital
Madison

Jefferson County Hospital
Louisville

Elbert County Hospital
Elberton

Ty Cobb Hospital
Royston

"We are so grateful for the REACH program. I don't believe they would have been able to save him without it."
–Amanda Daniel

A Worthy Endeavor

Mission Work Brings Family to Central Asia

"When you live in a different culture, your world view broadens quite a bit. It makes you appreciate how blessed you are to be an American. But we have such a strong sense of connectivity to central Asia and miss the people when we're in America. It's like we have two homes."

–Dr. Mike Worthy

When Dr. Mike and Barbara Worthy moved to central Asia, it was a baby named Moriah who made them feel truly at home.

One of the highest honors in the village is the naming of a newborn, a role usually reserved for the baby's paternal grandparents. A dentist named Nurbek had already lost his parents when his daughter was born three years ago, but he knew just where to turn for help. He asked the Worthys to name his daughter.

The honor affirmed not only the Worthys' deep friendship with Nurbek, but his family's and friends' acceptance of them.

Central Asia became the Worthys' unlikely new home in 1999. "I'd always been interested in doing short-term missions, and after a mission trip in 1997, my family and I decided to do mission work every summer instead of vacations," says Dr. Worthy, who earned a dental degree from MCG in 1980. "But within six months, I felt that God wanted me to do this full time."

It was a formidable challenge, to say the least. He and Barbara already had a full life in Hiawassee, Ga., where Dr. Worthy practiced general dentistry. But he felt his skills could be put to better use elsewhere. "I had a sense that there was more that I needed to do with my life," Dr. Worthy says.

Barbara and Mike Worthy (third and fourth from left) enjoy a feast with their new neighbors. (photo provided)

Barbara shared his commitment, as did their two exceptionally mature daughters, Claire and Alexis, who were teens at the time. The family moved to central Asia, where Dr. Worthy offers dentistry for free, supported by a Christian mission organization, churches and friends.

"Our profession gave us an opportunity to get into areas that otherwise would have been difficult to access," says Dr. Worthy. "Dentistry is the vehicle we use to serve others by sharing God's love."

The Worthys moved into a modest home, "renovating" it by installing indoor plumbing. They adapted to a very simple lifestyle.

"The people have few material possessions but are extremely hospitable with open hearts," says Dr. Worthy. "It comes naturally to them to welcome people into their homes."

But as much as the Worthys have grown to love their new home, they acknowledge that the transition was often daunting. "There were a lot of adjustments to make, and without God's help and empowerment, we could not have done it," says Mrs. Worthy. "It was like an adventure at first, but then reality would set in when the power went off and things weren't available. There were days that were very stressful. But we knew we were there for a purpose."

As they met new people and learned the Turkish-based language, they slowly assimilated into the culture. But even on their most difficult days, they had the satisfaction of providing much-needed service and forging deep friendships.

"You have to learn to adapt to their way of doing things," says Mrs. Worthy, noting adjustments such as sitting on the floor for meals.

"The area has challenges economically, infrastrucurally and educationally," Dr. Worthy says. "But the people understand the importance of education and they're very intelligent."

Today, the Worthys travel back and forth between central Asia and the States, where their daughters are working and earning graduate degrees.

"When you live in a different culture, your world view broadens quite a bit," says Dr. Worthy. "It makes you appreciate how blessed you are to be an American. But we have such a strong sense of connectivity to central Asia and miss the people when we're in America. It's like we have two homes."

"We've learned to have a larger family," says Mrs. Worthy. "The people are very close to our hearts. It's a precious thing to us." ➸

Christine Hurley Deriso

Pipeline Power

Federal Grant to Expand Programs for Minorities

The Medical College of Georgia Office of Educational Outreach and Partnerships has received an $899,439 three-year federal grant to expand pipeline programs designed to increase the number of minority health care providers in the state.

New offerings will range from summer science camps for grade-schoolers to intense Saturday sessions that help prepare college students for the national Medical College Admission Test.

"We wanted to expand our existing educational outreach programs and increase the number of competitive students in our health career pipeline," said Wilma Sykes-Brown, assistant dean for educational outreach and partnerships in the MCG School of Medicine.

Ms. Sykes-Brown is project director on the new Department of Health and Human Services grant, Partnership Innovations for Pipeline Success, or PIPS. Linda S. James, director of MCG's Educational Enrichment Programs, is co-director.

Grant partners for the summer camps include the National Science Center at Fort Discovery and 30901 Development Corp., the community outreach arm for Augusta's Beulah Grove Baptist Church. The Richmond County School District is the partner for the new summer JUMP SMART program. Partners for the new MCAT preparation program, the Pre-Medical Honor Corps Initiative, include seven Georgia colleges – Augusta State University, Clark Atlanta University, Georgia College & State University, Paine College, Valdosta State University, Fort Valley State University and Savannah State University. The Georgia Statewide Area Health Education Centers Network will open its extensive health care provider network throughout rural Georgia so honor corps students can shadow a provider.

The partners are helping make the new programs possible and unique, Ms. Sykes-Brown said. "We are looking forward to this statewide collaborative effort."

Fort Discovery grant writer Dave Smith wrote curricula for third- through eighth- graders that focus on science and math. "Our mission at Fort Discovery is to excite kids about math, science, engineering and technology, so this fits perfectly with our mission," Mr. Smith said.

Hundreds of children already come to summer camps at Fort Discovery where this year, for example, they learned about everything from Mars to dinosaurs. Beulah Grove also fills children's summers with information and fun in the Summer Explosion Program that prepares students for their next school year, said Francine Cayruth, chief operating officer for the 30901 Development Corp.

Next year, 80-100 of those children will spend their afternoons at Fort Discovery as the first participants of MCG's two-week Summer Science Camp. The new PIPS programs tie in well with Beulah Grove's plans to help children learn more about career opportunities, Ms. Cayruth said. "We already have a program in place where we bring in celebrities and dignitaries to talk with children," she said. The science camp will enable children to do the same with health care providers. "This will allow them to touch the doctors, touch the science, lead them to be involved in activities they may have not been involved with before," Ms. Cayruth said.

The hope is that the oldest camp graduates also will attend four Saturday sessions that prepare them for the new six-week JUMP SMART program for 10th- and 11th-graders from Richmond County, Ms. James said. JUMP SMART will expand the existing Student Educational Enrichment Programs for rising sophomores, juniors, seniors and new graduates with an interest in the health professions. SEEP students take biomedical sciences and medical writing classes and are offered MCAT preparation and review.

The seven Georgia colleges participating in the new Pre-Medical Honor Corps Initiative will work to increase the number of graduates who successfully enroll in medical school, Ms. Sykes-Brown said. The average MCAT for under-represented minority students in Georgia is lower than the national average, according to the Association of American Medical Colleges. The MCAT score is one of several considerations for acceptance into most medical schools.

Dave Smith (from left), Wilma Sykes-Brown, Francine Cayruth, Linda S. James and Jim Frye, director of the National Science Center-Army

"Students need to start thinking about what they need to do prepare for medical school and developing those skills early on, even before they go to college," Ms. James said. "Students with educationally disadvantaged backgrounds may not have that advantage. And, once they get to college, even if they have good academic advice, it may not be too late but it's a challenge. They really need to be exposed early on and start developing those good test-taking skills and strategies. That is what this grant is designed to do."

Commercially available MCAT preparation costs about $1,500, and many students and colleges can't afford it, Ms. Sykes-Brown said. Through the grant, each participating college will annually enroll eight academically strong, motivated rising sophomores, teach the Saturday sessions on their campus and pay a portion of the cost. Pre-med advisors at the colleges will serve as program coordinators. "This illustrates their commitment to their students," Ms. James said.

Students are making quite a commitment as well. They will take two to three six-hour Saturday classes each month for two years. "We are looking for motivated students," Ms. James said. Their efforts will yield them a small stipend and great preparation, she said.

It won't take long to start measuring success; the first students started this January and should be ready for medical school in three years, when the grant expires.

Ms. Sykes-Brown and Ms. James hope the success of the programs will provide more under-represented Georgians for the overall medical school applicant pool. ⊷

Toni Baker

Drs. Martha Bradshaw and Betty Pond

'Growing Personally and Professionally'

DRS. MARTHA BRADSHAW (LEFT) AND BETTY POND AT THE ANTONY GUILD DINNER

They have so much in common, but most importantly, their friendship.

Drs. Martha Bradshaw and Betty Pond are both nurses who display their commitment to the discipline in every imaginable way.

Dr. Bradshaw, who has bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees in nursing, joined the Medical College of Georgia faculty in 1982.

Although she worked in labor and delivery at MCG, Dr. Bradshaw's passion is teaching. "It's fresh," she said. "There's always something new. I have the opportunity to cultivate new nurses, the opportunity to share my ideas on what makes good nursing practice, exercising the Golden Rule – treating patients how you would want to be treated," she said.

Dr. Pond earned bachelor's and master's degrees in nursing from MCG, then joined the faculty in 1981. But her education wasn't finished yet; she went on to earn a doctorate in education, managing some savvy shuffling along the way to juggle work, family and school. "I could get [my daughters] off to school and be home when they got home," she recalled. "When the kids went to bed, I could start doing my work, from about nine to 12."

It helped that her husband encouraged her. "He was a big support," she said.

Both women have left the faculty, Dr. Pond in 1994, when she retired to have more family time. Dr. Bradshaw left in 2004 to return to her Dallas roots, becoming associate dean and professor of nursing at Baylor University.

But they have maintained close bonds with MCG. They renewed their commitment during a Nov. 4 dinner in Augusta for founding members of MCG's Milton Antony Guild. Guild members invest in MCG's future by contributing to the university in their estate-planning. Drs. Bradshaw and Pond see each other often but were particularly gratified to get together for such a mutually meaningful celebration.

"Being a part of MCG helped me grow both personally and professionally," Dr. Bradshaw said. "That's why I am willing to help create more nurses through [my gift to] the nursing program."

"Betty and Martha truly exemplify the values of the School of Nursing," said School of Nursing Dean Lucy Marion. "Their dedication, enthusiasm and support are humbling and inspiring. Their generosity will help ensure that future generations of nursing students will receive the best education possible, and that deserving students will receive financial assistance to help set their dreams in motion."

Options for Remembering MCG in Your Will

A bequest of a fixed dollar amount.

A percentage of your estate, allowing you to keep the division of the estate residue in desired proportions regardless of its size.

A contingent gift in which funds go to MCG if a designated beneficiary predeceases you.

A trust that pays income to a designated individual for life, with the remaining principal to be given to MCG thereafter.

A gift in memory/honor of yourself, your family or a person you have loved or admired.

For more information, please contact Tony Duva at 800-869-1113 or aduva@mcg.edu.

Information in this article is not intended as legal advice. For legal advice, please consult an attorney. Tax laws are subject to change.

Dear Readers,

It's hard to imagine a more rewarding professional experience than the one I was privileged to enjoy on **Nov. 4**. The occasion? MCG's **Milton Antony Guild Dinner**, a wonderful evening of food, fellowship and entertainment to honor the guild's founding members. *(Photo on back cover.)*

The guild honors those who help ensure the university's long-term excellence and vitality by including MCG in their estate-planning. Many guild members are alumni. Some are current or former faculty members. Others simply are members of the community who recognize and value MCG's many contributions to society.

But whatever their affiliation with MCG, it was clear during conversations at the Antony Guild dinner that each member has a very special place in his heart for the university. I loved hearing their stories. Many spoke of humble beginnings and their heartfelt appreciation that MCG provided them with an education that reaped innumerable benefits—mostly intangible—throughout their lives. Some grew up during the Great Depression and cited scholarships that provided the only possible means to a health care education. Others spoke of their gratitude that MCG's reach extends throughout the state and beyond, or their recognition of the university's impact on the local community.

Many Antony Guild members have gone on to make their own great contributions to health care. Others have worked hard in other ways to make their mark on society—raising wonderful children, running a local service station, practicing law through the ninth decade of life.... Their stories are as individual as yours. They're simply good people—great people, in my estimation—who want to extend their legacy of altruism by investing in MCG's future.

They have the satisfaction of knowing that a generation from now—or two, three, 10 generations down the road—deserving students will realize their dream of a health care career because a scholarship made it possible. They know that a medical procedure or research breakthrough, partially enabled by their generosity, will preclude future suffering. They know that an investment in MCG is an investment in a better future for us all.

They know that an investment in MCG is an investment in a better future for us all.

It was an honor to hear their stories. We'd like to hear yours, too. How has MCG changed your life? How might you help perpetuate those blessings for future generations? I'd love to hear from you.

Sincerely,

Tony Duva
Associate Vice President for Gift Giving
800-860-1113
aduva@mcg.edu

Medical College of Georgia
SchoolNEWS
Allied Health
Dentistry
Graduate Studies
Medicine
Nursing
Winter 2006

Put a Spring in Your Step During Homecoming April 27-30, 2006

Do you wonder what your former classmates have been up to? Would you like to visit a favorite former professor or see how the campus has changed since graduation? Do you yearn to see Augusta's brightly colored blankets of azaleas during the city's most beautiful time of year?

MCG will celebrate Homecoming 2006 April 27-30. The following events are planned for alumni, faculty and students. Registration is required, and advance registration is strongly encouraged. (Space for some events is limited.)

Wednesday, April 26

School of Dentistry Spring Fling Picnic
Lake Olmstead, 12:30 p.m.

Alumni have received registration forms in the mail. The deadline for advance registration is April 7.

For more information, contact the Alumni Affairs Office at 800-869-1113 706-721-6723 (fax) or www.mcg.edu/Alumni/Homecoming.html

Thursday, April 27

On-Site Registration
MCG Alumni Center, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

School of Dentistry Table Clinic Day
Wellness Center

School of Graduate Studies Alumni Association Board Meeting
Noon, MCG Alumni Center

School of Allied Health Sciences Department of Biomedical and Radiological Technologies program: The Emerging Workplace: Advanced Practice
Worth two hours of continuing education credit, followed by the presentation of Distinguished Alumni Awards and a reception
1-5 p.m., MCG Alumni Center

continued on page 30

continued from page 29

Friday, April 28

Goldstein Lectureship: Composite Resins and Glass Ionomers by Dr. Harry Albers
7:30 a.m. registration
Marriott Hotel and Suites*

School of Allied Health Sciences
Department of Dental Hygiene program:
"Advanced Clinical Practice: Diagnostics, Therapeutics and Instrumentation" by Lillian Caperila
Worth four hours of continuing education credit
8 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., Alumni Center
$60 for alumni and $80 for others

On-Site Registration
MCG Alumni Center, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Campus History Bus Tour and Luncheon
Noon, MCG Alumni Center

School of Dentistry
Alumni Association/Goldstein Luncheon
Noon, Marriott Hotel and Suites

School of Allied Health Sciences
Alumni Association Luncheon
12:30 p.m., Old Medical College

School of Dentistry canal boat tours
1 p.m.

Hospitality Suite
3-5 p.m., Marriott Hotel and Suites

School of Dentistry Alumni Association Reception
4:30 - 6:30 p.m., Marriott Hotel and Suites

School of Medicine Dean's Reception
5 p.m., Old Medical College

School of Medicine Alumni Association Banquet
6 p.m., Old Medical College

School of Graduate Studies Alumni Association
Distinguished Alumnus Award
Presentation and Lecture
7 p.m., MCG Alumni Center

Saturday, April 29

School of Allied Health Sciences
Dean's Reception
8-9:45 a.m., Marriott Hotel and Suites

On-Site Registration
MCG Alumni Center, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

School of Medicine Alumni Association
Board Meeting
9:30 am, Alumni Center

School of Nursing Dean's Brunch
9:30 a.m., School of Nursing

President's Cookout
Noon, President's Home, 920 Milledge Road

Hospitality Suite
3-6 p.m., Marriott Hotel and Suites

School of Dentistry Reunions for the classes of 1976, 1981 and 1991
6 p.m., Marriott Hotel and Suites

School of Medicine Reunions for the Classes of 1946, 1951, 1956, 1961, 1966, 1971, 1976, 1981, 1986, 1991, 1996, 2001
6 p.m., Marriott Hotel and Suites

School of Nursing Alumni Association
Banquet and Distinguished Alumnus Award
Presentation
6:30 p.m., Pinnacle Club

Homecoming Dance
9:45 p.m., Marriott Hotel and Suites

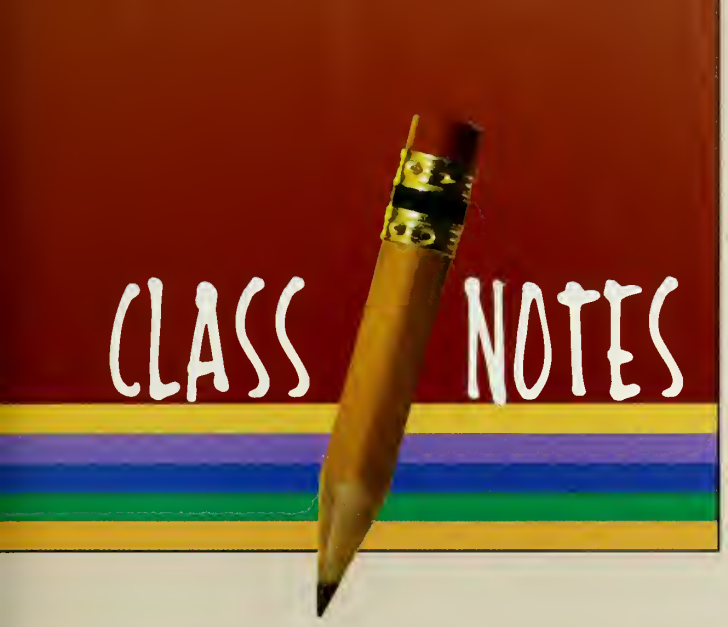
Sunday, April 30

School of Medicine Alumni Association Memorial Service
10:30 am, Old Medical College

School of Medicine Alumni Association
Emeritus Club Luncheon
11:30 am, Old Medical College

* Formerly the Augusta Radisson Riverfront Hotel, 2 Tenth Street

HOMECOMING



School of Dentistry

Dr. Jeffery Barnett *(2005)* has joined the Gainesville, Ga., dental practice of Dr. Henry G. Goble as a partner. Dr. Barnett and his wife, Dawn, have a daughter, Eva.

Obituaries

Dr. Michael D. Webster *('74)*, Rome, Ga., died Oct. 2. He loved boating, photography, travel and his profession.

School of Allied Health Sciences

Charles T. "Chuck" Adams *(nuclear medicine technology, '83)*, Royston, Ga., is the chief executive officer of Ty Cobb Healthcare System, a private self-supporting nonprofit health care organization serving Franklin, Hart, Madison and Barrow counties. He is a board member of the Georgia Hospital Association and the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce and recently was appointed to the Health Strategies Council by Georgia Gov. Sonny Perdue.

Melanie Maynor Sennett *(respiratory therapy, '88)* is chief certified registered nurse anesthetist at Durham Regional Hospital in Durham, N.C.

Jay Pottinger *('98)* and his wife, Dr. Jill Pottinger, Rome, Ga., work full time in the Floyd Medical Center emergency room and own Mediquick, a walk-in clinic that emphasizes low-cost service to uninsured and Hispanic patients.

Obituaries

Siri Schwartz Mills *(medical illustration, '76)* died recently of breast cancer. She lived in Muenchen, Germany with her husband, Ernst, and their daughter, Alexandra. "Siri was a beautiful and talented medical illustrator," said Kip Carter, president of the Association of Medical Illustrators. "She will be greatly missed."

School of Medicine

U.S. Rep. Phil Gingrey *('69)* was among hundreds of physicians who volunteered their service to Hurricane Katrina victims in the critical hours after New Orleans residents were forced from their homes. Dr. Gingrey, a gynecologist from Marietta, treated more than 20 patients at a sports arena in Baton Rouge, La. ***"They were all extremely grateful," he said, noting that his fellow volunteers "were just like me—folks who realized the need, jumped in their car or hopped a plane and they came."***

continued on page 32

Time for a Checkup

Alumni and friends are vital to MCG's mission. Please take a moment to submit your contact information at www.mcg.edu/vitals so we can update our records. The better our data, the better we can serve you.

CLASS NOTES

School of Medicine *continued*

Dr. Robert E. Dicks III *('73)*, Athens, Ga., has been appointed by Georgia Gov. Sonny Perdue as an at-large member of the state's Board of Human Resources. Dr. Dicks is the advisor to the chief executive officer and president for physician development at St. Mary's Hospital in Athens and is an adjunct professor at the University of Georgia in exercise science. He previously served as executive director of neuroscience at St. Mary's Hospital. Dr. Dicks is a member of the American Association of Neurological Surgeons, the Crawford W. Long Medical Society and the Georgia Neurological Surgery Society. He and wife Lynn have three children and two grandchildren.

Dr. Vendie Hooks *('74)*, a colon and rectal surgeon with Colon and Rectal Surgery Associates, PC in Augusta, has been elected president of the American Board of Colon and Rectal Surgery through September 2006.

Dr. Gillian Carpenter *('85)* has joined the 26-member cardiology team at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. She completed fellowships in pediatric cardiology at Georgetown University Medical Center and Children's National Medical Center in Washington, D.C. She has served as a pediatric cardiologist with Child Cardiology Associates, PC, in Washington, D.C., and assistant clinical professor of pediatrics and pediatric cardiologist at Georgetown University Medical Center. Dr. Carpenter has co-authored several journal articles related to pediatric cardiology. She served for three years as a pediatric cardiologist in Gainesville, Ga., before moving to her current position.

Dr. Chad Marley *(2000)* is a brigade surgeon serving in Iraq, overseeing seven doctors and eight physician assistants to provide medical care and supplies for the 5,500 soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team. He was recently inducted into Gwinnett County's Shiloh High School Alumni Association Hall of Fame. He was a three-time state champion wrestler at Shiloh from 1990-92. He and wife Catherine have a son, Max.

Dr. Jorge O. Escamilla, an obstetrics/gynecology resident at MCG from 1951-54 under Dr. Richard Torpin, refined a forceps delivery technique for posterior presentations during his career. He also created tools to clinically measure the AP diameter of a laboring patient and a "shoe horn" for shoulder dystocia. He retired in 1994.

Dr. Sheri Holmes, who completed her OB/GYN residency at MCG, has joined the East Tennessee State University Cancer Center at Johnson City Medical Center. In addition to supporting the center's gynecological oncology division, she will have a general women's health practice through ETUS Physicians and Associates-OB/GYN.

Attention, Alumni

Please keep us posted on personal and professional achievements by dropping us a line. Remember to include your degree, class year and contact information.
Send information to:

Scott Henson, Director of Alumni Affairs
FI-1000, Medical College of Georgia
Augusta GA 30912

706-721-3430 (phone)
706-721-6397 (fax)
shenson@mcg.edu (e-mail)

Medical College of Georgia
AlliedHealth NEWS
Winter 2006

Need for Allied Health Professionals is Growing

As America faces a shortage of health care professionals, Dr. Shelley Mishoe faces the interesting problem of classrooms and programs at full capacity.

"Enrollment in our allied health programs has increased 25 percent [in three years]," said Dr. Mishoe, dean of the School of Allied Health Sciences. "The medical technology program alone has quadrupled its enrollment over the past three years."

Allied health professionals comprise about 60 percent, or 5 million to 6 million, of today's health care professionals, according to some estimates. Fifteen of the 30 fastest-growing jobs in the United States are allied health professions.

MCG's allied health science programs—biomedical and radiological technology, dental hygiene, health informatics, medical illustration, occupational therapy, physical therapy, physician assistant and respiratory therapy—are at maximum enrollment. The school, in cooperation with Gwinnett Health Systems, also operates a satellite program at Georgia Gwinnett College to allow more students into the nuclear medical technology and medical technology programs.

"Graduates from entry-level programs are the ones who will have the biggest impact and increase the workforce," said Dr. Mishoe. "We also provide programs for advanced-level training, which is another important need and part of our mission."

Allied health professionals comprise about 60 percent, or 5 million to 6 million, of today's health care professionals, according to some estimates. Fifteen of the 30 fastest-growing jobs in the United States are allied health professions.

Attracting students to allied health programs isn't the challenge – the cost of educating them is, according to Dr. Mishoe.

Occupational therapy students Kimberly Chu (right) and Molly Hefner perform ergonomics assessment.

"Our graduates leave with skills that they've learned in clinical and lab experiences – experiences that can't be duplicated," she said. "Having to do things hands-on makes the programs expensive. A lot of the professions are also technology-based. We have to offer students the latest technology to train on, and that's also expensive."

But there are ways, Dr. Mishoe said, to increase program size and efficiency. Finding extramural funding sources for faculty positions like endowed chairs, collaborating with other MCG schools and conducting pipeline activities to interest young people in the disciplines will help decrease costs and attract students who are more likely to stay in the programs, she said.

"Our faculty, paid and volunteer, work very hard with our students to minimize attrition," Dr. Mishoe said. "Every slot is important for preparing the next health professional."

Increasing public knowledge about what allied health professionals are and do will also help encourage people to join the field, Dr. Mishoe said.

"There is a real lack of public knowledge about allied health professionals" she said. "We are involved in a lot of acute care when patients are unconscious and so much of what we do is often behind the scenes that people don't often realize just how big our role is in maintaining and restoring good health."

To learn more about career opportunities in allied health, see the school's video at www.mcg.edu/sah/sahs-vid.html.

Jennifer Hilliard

Simulator Puts Stroke Patients

A high-fidelity simulator that allows people to practice driving on a computer-generated course can help stroke patients learn to drive again, researchers have found.

Patients who received simulator training were also almost twice as likely as stroke patients without the training to pass an official driving test at the end of a five-week training period, according to Dr. Abiodun Akinwuntan, a Medical College of Georgia physical therapy instructor and the lead researcher on the study published in the Sept. 27 issue of *Neurology*.

"Traditionally, to help patients learn to drive again, therapists have relied on conventional methods like paper-and-pencil-based training and sometimes an on-road training method," Dr. Akinwuntan said. "I have never been a proponent of the on-road method because it can be unsafe. Healthy drivers find the roads dangerous enough."

In 2003, Dr. Akinwuntan and his colleagues at the Katholieke Universiteit in Leuven, Belgium, the Belgian Road Safety Institute in Brussels and University Hospital in Pellenberg, Belgium studied 83 stroke patients in the hospital's rehabilitation unit. Using a 20-mile computer-simulated course that Dr. Akinwuntan developed, patients practiced driving in a variety of traffic situations. Virtual rural and open roads, urban settings and highways each tested a different skill level.

"Rural, small roads have less traffic and test basic skills," he said. "The urban setting has more traffic and can test how well patients perform when their attention is divided among many distractions, and the highway setting gives an idea whether they understand what it means to overtake another car and effectively react to other drivers and their maneuvers."

"The urban setting has more traffic and can test how well patients perform when their attention is divided among many distractions, and the highway setting gives an idea whether they understand what it means to overtake another car and effectively react to other drivers and their maneuvers."
–Dr. Abiodun Akinwuntan

For training, patients drive in a specially equipped car on a course projected on a large screen. Mistakes are monitored both by computer and an observing evaluator. Patients using simulator training were more likely both to pass the driver's test and to retain the skill level achieved in training.

The possibilities to apply simulator training to other areas are endless, Dr. Akinwuntan said. For example, the simulator could help determine the types of driving skills affected at different stages of Parkinson's disease and how interventions like deep-brain stimulation help people overcome some of the problems.

Dr. Akinwuntan also plans to help develop a unit at MCG that would use simulators and virtual reality systems to help doctors and therapists determine the challenges patients face after leaving the hospital.

"Such information could be used to modify interventions or influence the rehabilitation programs of patients," Dr. Akinwuntan said.

Dr. Akinwuntan, a native of Nigeria, earned a physical therapy degree from the College of Medicine, University of Lagos in Nigeria, then worked at the industrial hospital in Lagos for three years before he longed to supplement his clinical work with research.

"I was looking for a way to present my success stories objectively," Dr. Akinwuntan said. "Of course I can tell people about my successes, but there will always be questions. Was the success pure chance? Is there a standard way to teach this to other people? Could it be applied to other patients? Research was the only answer."

He searched worldwide for a research program and found one at the Katholieke Universiteit. He didn't know then what he'd gotten himself into.

"The program director said he'd let me in the program if I conducted specific research," he said. "We knew that a stroke affected driving, but there wasn't

Dr. Abiodun Akinwuntan

Back in the Driver's Seat

any research saying whether those who had a stroke could be rehabilitated to drive again and how."

Dr. Akinwuntan began a study and found that high-fidelity simulator training could prepare stroke patients to drive again. The finding yielded several national and international awards, including the Outstanding Student Paper Award from the International Symposium on Human Factors in Driver Assessment in Aspen, Colo., in 2001.

Dr. Akinwuntan received his master's degree in physiotherapy in 2000 and his Ph.D. in 2004, both from the Katholieke Universiteit. He also worked as a senior lecturer and earned a postgraduate certificate in teaching and learning in higher education at the University of East London, where he worked from 2004-05.

He joined the MCG faculty in April, eager to apply his simulator training to other areas. "I'm ready to face the challenges of finding funding to continue the research," he said. "I just want to be able to make a difference." ➸

Jennifer Hilliard

MCG Upgrades Physician Assistant Program to Master's Level

The School of Allied Health Sciences will upgrade the physician assistant program to a master's program in May, deactivating its bachelor's degree by fall 2007 when current students are scheduled to graduate.

MCG is acting on the recommendation of the Association of Physician Assistant Programs and the American Academy of Physician Assistants to transition all physician assistant educational programs to a master's degree by 2008.

"Our faculty will be working hard to preserve the strengths of our baccalaureate program and to build a unique graduate curriculum that will develop excellent clinicians, educators and leaders of the future," said Dr. Bonnie Dadig, chair of the Physician Assistant Department.

Physician assistants treat patients under the supervision and responsibility of a physician. They conduct physical exams, diagnose and treat medical problems, order and interpret tests, counsel patients, assist in surgery, and in nearly all states, including Georgia, can write prescriptions.

Physician assistants are educated in the medical model. Like medical students, their training includes a combination of classroom studies and clinical experience.

Applications submitted to MCG's program are being evaluated based on the new M.P.A criteria.

According to Judith Stallings, director of admissions, applicants needn't have a bachelor's degree to qualify for the new program. "Students must have a minimum of 90 credit hours in order to enter the program, which does not necessarily mean they've earned a bachelor's degree," she said.

The M.P.A. program is offered over seven semesters, one semester longer than the bachelor's-level program, and requires several new mandatory prerequisites, including biochemistry, statistics and introduction to computers.

MCG physician assistant graduates consistently earn a nearly 100 percent satisfaction rating from employers and exceed national averages of certification tests, Dr. Dadig said.

For more information about the program, including admission requirements, call 706-721-2725, visit www.mcg.edu/sah/PhyAsst/ or arrange a Closer Look tour by calling 706-721-2725 or 800-519-3388. ➸

Kim Miller

Program Will Link Consumers to Health Care Providers

The Medical College of Georgia has joined a nationwide initiative to link consumers to health care providers through the World Wide Web.

GoLocal, funded through the National Library of Medicine, will enable a patient or consumer anywhere in Georgia to visit the MedLine Plus Web site for health information, then be directed to providers in their area. MedLine Plus is the National Library of Medicine's consumer health information Web site.

MCG is collaborating with Mercer University, Morehouse College and Emory University to compile a statewide database of providers, support groups, clinics and other services.

"The basic idea is that without having to do a lot of searching, consumers can find high-quality health information and health service providers," said Dr. Kent Guion, associate dean of academic affairs in the School of Allied Health Sciences.

Dr. Guion, who is working with staff in MCG's Greenblatt Library on the project, was selected because of his experience with GRID – the School of Allied Health Sciences' rural online health directory. Like GoLocal, GRID allows rural Georgians to search out health services by city, county, service or organization. That Web site averages more than 100 hits per week and lists more than 1,600 resources in its database.

GoLocal's main challenge will be increasing the general public's awareness of MedlinePlus, Dr. Guion said.

"The ideal is that a person would start with MedLine Plus when looking for health-related information and then be led to GoLocal to find providers in their area," he said. "So many people don't know where to look for information. A lot of it is word of mouth now, and people have to be really careful with a lot of what they find on the Internet."

The project will be implemented in phases, first incorporating existing databases, services and resources like GRID and Georgia 2-1-1, an information and referral service operated by the United Way. Once a base has been established, project coordinators will add resources county by county across the state. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is coordinating the project. When the system is fully implemented, Georgia will be one of 20 states in the country offering the service.

For more information about the GoLocal initiative, visit www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/golocal.html.

Students Garner Honors, Scholarships

Several School of Allied Health Sciences students have been honored recently, including:

- Respiratory therapy student **Leslie Gordon**, who received the 2005 Morton B. Duggan, Jr. Memorial Education Recognition Award from the American Respiratory Care Foundation. This is the seventh year in a row that MCG respiratory therapy students have received at least one national award from the foundation, according to Dr. Randy Baker, chair of the department.
- Dental hygiene students **Jennifer Mestres, Shawn Neal** and **Dani Van Deven**, who received scholarships from the American Dental Hygienists' Association Institute for Oral Health. The scholarship fund, established in 1962, provides financial support to dental hygiene students and dental hygienists who demonstrate academic and professional excellence.
- Physician assistant students **Jason Rodwell** and **Wendy Royal**, who represented MCG's winning team at the Georgia Association of Physician Assistants' 2005 Student Medical Challenge Bowl. The competition tests the medical knowledge of physician assistant students in Georgia. MCG has won the tournament each of its two years of participation, beginning last year.

Dr. Dadig's Artwork Featured in Magazine

On a recent business trip, Dr. Bonnie Dadig found an odd source of inspiration for her painting hobby: the back of a plane seat.

Dr. Dadig, chair and program director of the Department of Physician Assistant, found an issue of *Skywest Magazine* that featured an article filled with photos of picturesque Utah sites by award-winning photographer Frank Jensen. Using the small travel palate and watercolor pencils she frequently takes on plane trips, she started recreating the images on canvas, intending to use the artwork for birthday gifts.

But the gesture came full circle when she submitted her artwork to the very magazine that inspired her: *Skywest Magazine*. The magazine published her artwork in its September 2005 edition.

Dr. Dadig has enjoyed the recognition but keeps her hobby firmly in perspective. "It's something I usually just do to pass the time," she said with a laugh.

Medical College of Georgia
DentistryNEWS
Winter 2006

Dean Praises School's Accomplishments

Dean Connie Drisko delivers State of the School Address

The Medical College of Georgia School of Dentistry has exceeded nearly all of the five- to eight-year strategic goals set in 2002 and is moving to the future with new goals already identified, according to Dean Connie Drisko.

"We had a plan to move the School of Dentistry from good to great within five to eight years," said Dr. Drisko in her State of the School Address Oct. 25. "We've exceeded our goals in many areas, but there's still work to do."

Five areas for recommendations and resource needs have been identified as part of the school's strategic plan: clinical services, educational programs, scholarly activity, alumni relations/ fundraising and oral health/community outreach.

Challenges in those areas include recruiting top-notch faculty to fill vacant positions, including a director of regenerative medicine and chair of oral surgery; raising funds to build a new dental school; and implementing a comprehensive care clinic and a new clinic record-keeping and operating system to streamline patient care.

The school has met nearly all of the educational goals it identified three years ago, including attracting a more diverse student body, establishing more flexibility in the curriculum to encourage students to seek master's degrees or participate in research and keeping student scores on National Board Examinations above the national average. The national average score last year was 81.4. MCG students scored an average of 83.9, ranking seventh in the nation.

> ***"I think that by this time next year, we'll be 10 times stronger than we are now. That's tremendous."***
>
> ***–Dean Connie Drisko***

Dr. Drisko also praised the faculty for continually submitting proposals for research in an effort to move MCG into the top-20 dental schools for extramural funding. So far this year, faculty members have submitted 49 research proposals for $12,775,486 worth of funding. They also pursued training grants to support talented students, existing faculty, newly recruited professors and doctoral students.

Strides have also been made for the school's Faculty Practice Group, including renovating the practice's space and establishing better business practices and providing a stable infrastructure.

Another important goal accomplished in the last year included increasing the number of students from underserved areas accepted to the program. Currently, 21 percent of the school's students are from underserved areas.

"The idea is that those students are likely to go back to that area and serve," Dr. Drisko said.

A recent site visit resulted in full re-accreditation without reporting requirements. The school marked a 20 percent increase in dental clinic revenue and invested $500,000 in clinic renovations and equipment, marking a 7 percent increase in the number of patients last year.

A Ryan White Grant yielded a 121 percent increase in dental care provided to patients with HIV/AIDS, and a $566,000 annual contract secured through the Georgia Department of Community Health yielded a 27 percent increase in the number of Medicaid patients seen at the school.

And the future will only be brighter, Dr. Drisko said.

continued

continued from page 37

"I think that by this time next year, we'll be 10 times stronger than we are now," she said. "That's tremendous."

The school has worked to establish a strong working relationship with its former students. As a result, alumni contributions have increased by 25 percent. In 2004-05, alumni gave $109,474, up from $45,579 in 2002-03. Several individuals and groups have also made significant contributions, including a $500,000 gift from the Thomas P. Hinman Dental Society for an endowed chair.

The school has also worked to increase the awareness of the importance of good oral health across the state and continues its efforts to provide oral health education at all levels of society, most notably to underserved populations in Georgia.

The school operates seven community outreach programs.

The school has also performed a feasibility study for a fundraising capital campaign. As the state's only dental school, the School of Dentistry must have a new facility to continue ensuring the finest possible oral health education, research and clinical care for all Georgians. Of the proposed costs, $78 million has been recommended by the University System of Georgia Board of Regents. The remaining $30 million must come in the form of gifts from individuals, corporations and foundations.

MCG President Emeritus Francis J. Tedesco (from left) and President Daniel W. Rahn present portrait to Dr. David Myers and family.

Dr. Myers Honored with Portrait

The Medical College of Georgia unveiled a portrait of Dr. David Myers, dean of the School of Dentistry from 1989 to 2001, in an Oct. 13 ceremony in the dental school auditorium.

The portrait, jointly commissioned by the School of Dentistry Alumni Association and the dean's office, joins that of his predecessor, the late Dr. Judson C. Hickey, in the administration suite of the dental school building.

Dr. Myers was the second dean of the School of Dentistry, which opened in 1966. He is credited with implementing several technological advances, including MCG's first simulation lab. "Every school in the country came here to see it," said Dean Connie Drisko. "If I look back on David's legacy, that's certainly the place he made his mark."

"We are grateful to Dr. Myers for maintaining a tradition of excellence throughout his deanship," said MCG President Daniel W. Rahn. "His significant contributions to dental education and research created a strong foundation to support the dental school's current rate of growth."

Dr. Carole Hanes, associate dean of students, admissions and alumni, cited Dr. Myers' unique management style. "His quiet confidence and ability to never sweat the small stuff resulted in tremendous leadership for the School of Dentistry during his tenure," she said.

The portrait artist is Barry Koenig of Barry Koenig Photography in Augusta.

Kim Miller

Alumni contributions have increased by 25 percent. In 2004-05, alumni gave $109,474, up from $45,579 in 2002-03. Several individuals and groups have also made significant contributions, including a $500,000 gift from the Thomas P. Hinman Dental Society for an endowed chair.

Dr. Sharawy Wins Research Award

Dr. Mohamed Sharawy

Dr. Mohamed Sharawy, professor of oral biology and maxillofacial pathology, has received the 2005 Isaiah Lew Memorial Research Award from the American Academy of Implant Dentistry Research Foundation.

The award honors significant contributions to research in implant dentistry and singular leadership and responsibility in research that advances the science of implant dentistry.

Dr. Sharawy uses a TMJ animal model to study osteoarthritis, bone grafts and implants and researches synthetics combined with growth factors to treat bone defects. In addition to his teaching responsibilities, he serves as a grant reviewer for the National Science Foundation and as the scientific chair for the International Dental Congress in Cairo.

A faculty member since 1970, Dr. Sharawy received a bachelor's degree in dental surgery in 1962 from the University of Cairo and a Ph.D. in 1970 from the University of Rochester in New York.

Dr. Lefebvre Selected for Leadership Program

Dr. Carol Lefebvre

Dr. Carol Lefebvre, a professor of oral rehabilitation and oral biology in the School of Dentistry, is one of only 45 women in the United States and Canada selected as a fellow for the Hedwig van Ameringen Executive Leadership in Academic Medicine program.

The program is the only in-depth national course that prepares senior women faculty for leadership positions at academic health centers.

Dr. Lefebvre, a faculty member at MCG since 1989, is the director of the Section of Removable Prosthodontics in the School of Dentistry and is the editor of *The Journal of Prosthetic Dentistry*.

The ELAM curriculum combines traditional business training with issues and strategies in health management. Personal and professional development programs also focus on leadership, career advancement, communication and the use of new information and learning technology. The program aims to increase the number of women in leadership positions at academic health centers and increase their success rate in attaining and remaining in those positions.

Other ELAM alumni from MCG include Dr. Connie Drisko, dean of the School of Dentistry; Dr. Carole Hanes, associate dean for students and admissions in the School of Dentistry; Dr. Sally Atherton, chair of cellular biology and anatomy in the School of Medicine; and Dr. Leslie Fuchs, the director of the M.D./Ph.D. program in the School of Graduate Studies.

Dr. Bill Williams

Alumnus Receives Business Award

Dr. Bill Williams, a 1975 School of Dentistry graduate, has been named the Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce Small Business Person of the Year.

The award honors staying power in business, sales growth and contributions to the community.

Dr. Williams, the dentist for the Gwinnett Gladiators hockey team, practiced in Stone Mountain, Ga., for 23 years, then launched Suwanee Dental Care in Suwanee, Ga., in 1997. He sees at least 100 new patients a month.

"Staying small isn't really part of my genetic makeup," said Dr. Williams. "We started in a 1,000-square-foot building, then moved to 4,000, and now we're looking to expand again."

Dr. Williams also works at the Hebron Dental Clinic for the poor and contributes to the Brighter Smiles for Brighter Futures Campaign.

"I'm truly humbled," Dr. Williams said about the award.

Dental Screenings Reach Local Children

Taja Murphy may only be 5 years old, but after seeing MCG dental students perform dental screenings at her school, she had her career path planned out.

"I want to be a dentist so I can make people's teeth pretty," she said with a toothy grin.

As a student at Jenkins-White Elementary school, Taja received a free dental screening Oct. 11 as part of Affiliated Computer Solutions, Inc.'s Georgia Dental Healthcare Outreach program. Now in its second year, MCG has partnered with the company and the Georgia Dental Society to help alleviate oral health problems for underserved children in Georgia.

The Student National Dental Association, a campus organization for minority dental students, volunteered their services during the Oct. 11 launch. The screenings were a familiar scene for Sharcola Vaughn, president of the organization. She participated in a similar program at her elementary school near Atlanta when she was a child.

"For many, like myself, this opportunity may be a stimulus to them choosing a career in dentistry," Ms. Vaughn said.

Dental decay is the most chronic childhood disease, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. And for children in lower-income areas, the high cost of biannual dental visits is not always an option.

"Untreated tooth decay in children can lead to pain, infection, fever and swelling, which in some cases can become quite severe and debilitating," said Dr. Carole Hanes, assistant dean of students, admissions and alumni.

In addition to the screenings, children attended a short lesson on healthy oral hygiene techniques, including how to prevent dental problems.

"You need to floss every day and eat healthy foods like grapes, bananas and carrots," said Naaim Colbert, 5.

Dr. Alfred Wyatt, president of GDS, said the program will benefit the community by inspiring dental students to be more civic-minded in their careers.

"It's good to show them what dentists are doing," he said. "Hopefully the community service bug will rub off on them." ⊷

Kim Miller

Student Receives Award for Mercury Research

Melissa Shaw, a third-year dental student at the Medical College of Georgia, won the 2005 President's Award for Excellence in Dental Research Presentation for her oral presentation on mercury toxicity research at the Hinman Student Research Symposium in Memphis, Tenn.

The symposium, sponsored by the Thomas B. Hinman Society of Atlanta, features oral and poster presentations of research studies conducted by dental students and graduate trainees in the United States and Canada.

"We are proud of Melissa and all the MCG students who participated," said Dr. John Wataha, MCG professor of oral biology and maxillofacial pathology. "The students and lab technicians provide each other insight and encouragement, making each project a collaborative effort. This award reflects the high caliber of dental research at MCG."

MCG dental students Shaun Rotenberg, Matt Folan and Stacey Poole also presented projects at the symposium. They conduct their research in the same laboratory assisted by MCG laboratory technicians Petie Lockwood, Veronica McCloud and Yolanda Brown. Drs. Wataha, Jill Lewis and Regina Messer, also MCG School of Dentistry faculty, directed the research of the students.

Ms. Shaw is investigating the effects of ultra-low blood levels of mercury that build up from exposure to the environment, foods or dental silver fillings. Her findings suggest that ultra-low levels of mercury affect monocytes, a type of white blood cells, but monocytes counteract these low levels successfully. Ms. Shaw's work is part of the group's ongoing effort to assess the biological safety of biomedical materials.

The President's Award for Excellence in Dental Research Presentation is sponsored by the National Students Research Group of the American Association for Dental Research. ⊷

Kim Miller

"The students and lab technicians provide each other insight and encouragement, making each project a collaborative effort. This award reflects the high caliber of dental research at MCG."

–Dr. John Wataha

Medical College of Georgia
GraduateStudiesNEWS
Winter 2006

Lipids Linked to Nervous System Development

Blocking a signaling lipid can keep nerves from developing the arm-like extensions they need to wire the body and may even cause neurons to die, researchers have found.

The researchers hope this understanding of how the central nervous system develops in the first place will one day help them repair loss from injury or disease.

It has already helped them understand the ailments of a mouse model with about 20 percent function of the protein that helps the lipid reach the cell surface to help axons grow, said Dr. Wen-Cheng Xiong, developmental neurobiologist and corresponding author on the study published in the November issue of *Nature Cell Biology*.

The mutant mouse is small and has motor neuron degeneration, with tremors, short limbs and a short life. This work unraveled the mystery of what the blocked lipid transfer protein regulated. The lipids help give shape and function to cell units including the nucleus and mitochondria.

"Traditionally, people didn't think these lipids were regulated. They thought they were just there," said Dr. Xiong. "But what we found is this particular lipid is regulated; it's like a signaling molecule. Especially during axon growth, the dynamic regulation is more dramatic."

DRS. WEN-CHENG XIONG (LEFT), DAVID J. KOZLOWSKI

She and her colleagues found the lipid is transferred to the cell surface at just the right time and place by phosphatidylinositol transfer protein-a, which humans also have. It's been known that many proteins can be regulated, especially signaling proteins that enable intracellular chatter. "Now we have found this protein regulates lipids and lipids also travel," Dr. Xiong said.

The mutant mouse embodies what can happen when the lipids don't travel. The researchers also studied a similar mutant chick embryo that had reduced axon growth. For this paper, they added the zebrafish embryo, which forms most of its major organs within 24 hours and remains transparent for the first few days of life, to further document the role of these regulated lipids and their transfer protein.

When they injected an agent that blocks expression of a related lipid transport protein, they could almost immediately see the impact on axon growth and neuron survival, said Dr. David J. Kozlowski, developmental geneticist and director of the MCG Transgenic Zebrafish Core Laboratory. The greater the suppression, the greater the resulting defect.

Next, they'll use a version of the transgenic zebrafish to watch axon development in live embryos and in real time. They also will study what happens to lipid activity in an injury model. They already know some signaling proteins are disturbed.

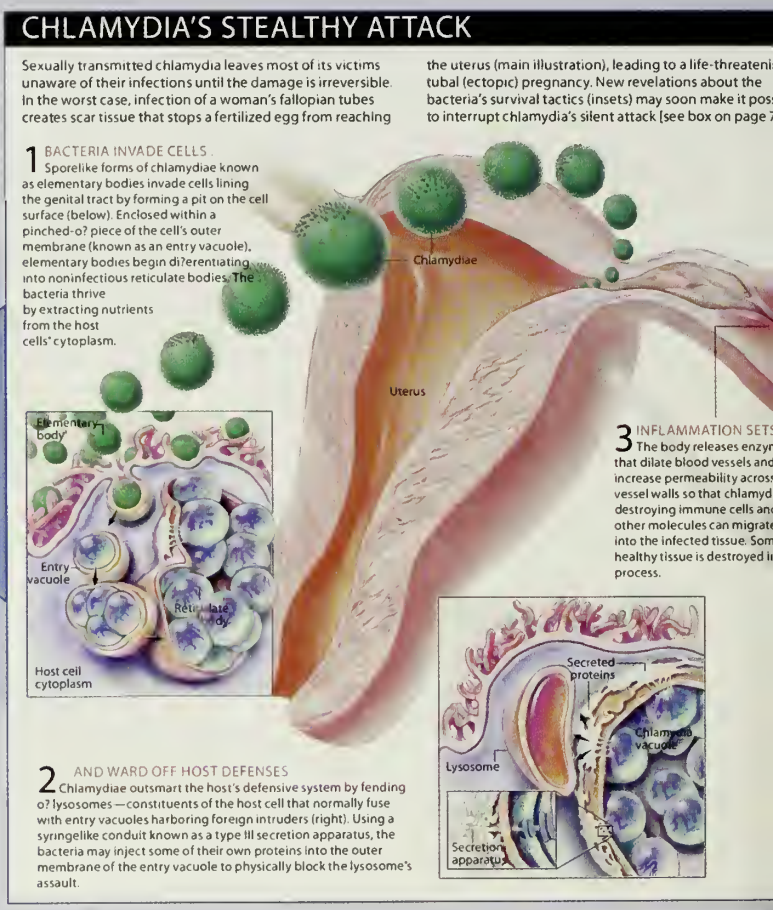
The work was supported by the National Institutes of Health.

Toni Baker

Medical Illustrators Honored

Six MCG alumni and faculty received honors for artwork at the 60th annual meeting of the Association of Medical Illustrators in Thousand Oaks, Calif.

Andrew Swift, assistant professor of medical illustration at MCG and a 1999 alumnus of the Department of Medical Illustration, won the Ralph Sweet Best of Show Award for his instructional color illustration, "Chlamydia's Stealthy Attack," featured in the article, "Can Chlamydia be Stopped?" in the May issue of *Scientific American*.


CHLAMYDIA'S STEALTHY ATTACK
Sexually transmitted chlamydia leaves most of its victims unaware of their infections until the damage is irreversible. In the worst case, infection of a woman's fallopian tubes creates scar tissue that stops a fertilized egg from reaching the uterus (main illustration), leading to a life-threateni tubal (ectopic) pregnancy. New revelations about the bacteria's survival tactics (insets) may soon make it pos to interrupt chlamydia's silent attack [see box on page 7
1 BACTERIA INVADE CELLS
Sporelike forms of chlamydiae known as elementary bodies invade cells lining the genital tract by forming a pit on the cell surface (below). Enclosed within a pinched-o? piece of the cell's outer membrane (known as an entry vacuole), elementary bodies begin di?erentiating into noninfectious reticulate bodies. The bacteria thrive by extracting nutrients from the host cells' cytoplasm.
Chlamydiae
Uterus
Elementary body
Entry vacuole
Host cell cytoplasm
3 INFLAMMATION SET
The body releases enzyr that dilate blood vessels and increase permeability across vessel walls so that chlamyd destroying immune cells an other molecules can migrate into the infected tissue. Som healthy tissue is destroyed i process.
Secreted proteins
Lysosome
Secretion apparatus
2 AND WARD OFF HOST DEFENSES
Chlamydiae outsmart the host's defensive system by fending o? lysosomes—constituents of the host cell that normally fuse with entry vacuoles harboring foreign intruders (right). Using a syringelike conduit known as a type III secretion apparatus, the bacteria may inject some of their own proteins into the outer membrane of the entry vacuole to physically block the lysosome's assault.

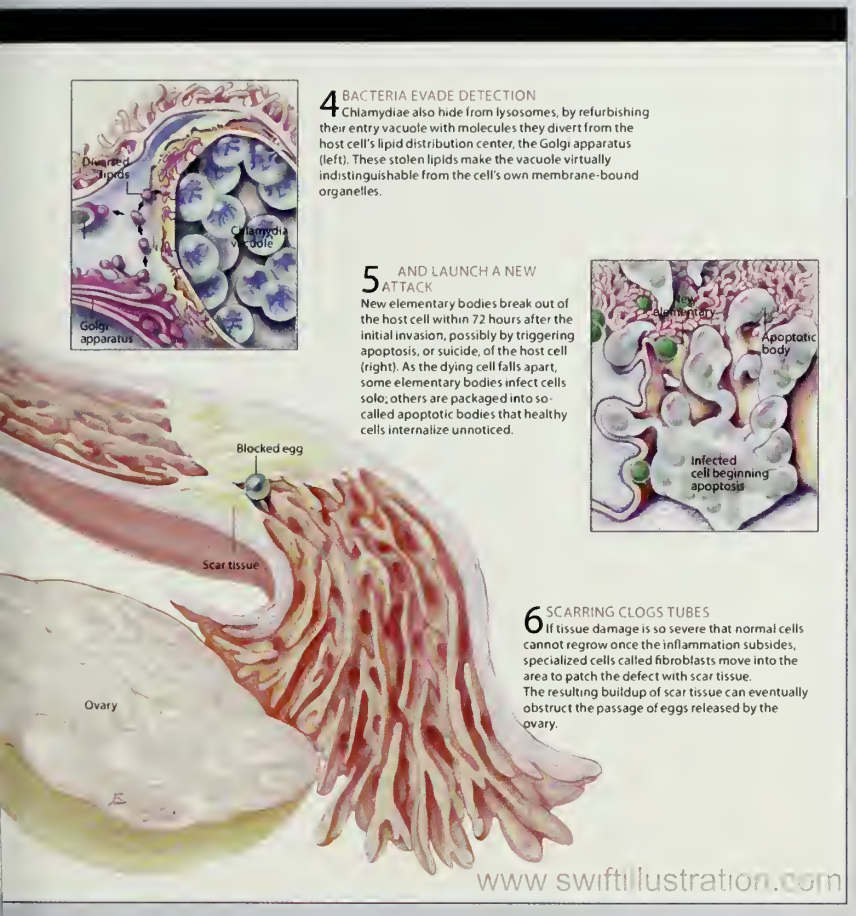
Awards of Excellence were given to Knox Hubard, class of 2000, for his medical-legal illustration, "Nonunion of Humeral Fracture: Internal vs. External Fixation," and Chris Nadolski, class of 2000, and Eric Olson, class of 1999, for their interactive media presentation, "Merck Ophthalmology Virtual Preceptorship."

Craig Foster, class of 1992, received two Certificates of Merit in the animation category for "A Closer Look at the Role of Progestins in Hormonal Contraceptives" and "Control of Prosthetic Bacterial Infection with Silver Ions." Mr. Swift's color illustration, "Chlamydia's Stealthy Attack" also won a Certificate of Merit for the instructional color category.

MCG medical illustrator Michael Jensen, class of 2005, received a Certificate of Merit for his animation, "An Introduction to the Corticospinal Tract."

In a separate venue, Kristen Larson, class of 2006, received an Award of Excellence for her illustration, "Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy" in the exhibition, "Art in Medicine: Illustrations of Human Anatomy" at the Hearst Center for the Arts in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. The exhibition is on display through Oct. 16 in the Dahl-Thomas Gallery of the Hearst Center.

Life Sciences Innovation Center


4 BACTERIA EVADE DETECTION
Chlamydiae also hide from lysosomes, by refurbishing their entry vacuole with molecules they divert from the host cell's lipid distribution center, the Golgi apparatus (left). These stolen lipids make the vacuole virtually indistinguishable from the cell's own membrane-bound organelles.
Diverted lipids
Chlamydia vacuole
Golgi apparatus
5 AND LAUNCH A NEW ATTACK
New elementary bodies break out of the host cell within 72 hours after the initial invasion, possibly by triggering apoptosis, or suicide, of the host cell (right). As the dying cell falls apart, some elementary bodies infect cells solo; others are packaged into so-called apoptotic bodies that healthy cells internalize unnoticed.
New elementary bodies
Apoptotic body
Infected cell beginning apoptosis
Blocked egg
Scar tissue
Ovary
6 SCARRING CLOGS TUBES
If tissue damage is so severe that normal cells cannot regrow once the inflammation subsides, specialized cells called fibroblasts move into the area to patch the defect with scar tissue. The resulting buildup of scar tissue can eventually obstruct the passage of eggs released by the ovary.
www.swiftillustration.com

The Life Sciences Innovation Center hosted an open house Oct. 25 to educate the community about its role as MCG's business development center and the sponsors and members who are helping to shape the future of the life sciences in the Augusta area. The center is located in MCG's Interdisciplinary Research Building. For more information, visit www.mcg.edu/incubator.

Dr. Brann Receives Distinguished Alumni Award

Dr. Darrell W. Brann, professor and associate director of the Medical College of Georgia Institute of Neuroscience, received the 2005 Distinguished Alumni Award from his undergraduate alma mater, Henderson State University in Arkansas.

Dr. Brann, who earned his Ph.D. in endocrinology from MCG in 1990, received the MCG School of Graduate Studies Distinguished Alumi Award in 2001. He completed postdoctoral training in neuroendocrinology at MCG before joining the faculty in 1992.

He is an ad hoc member of the Integrative and Clinical Endocrinology and Reproduction Study Section of the National Institutes of Health and a member of the NIH's FO2A Neurosciences Fellowship Study Section. He is a reviewer for a number of journals including the American Journal of Physiology, Brain Research, Journal of Neuroscience, Endocrinology and Neuroscience.

He is co-director of a five-year NIH training grant in neurodegenerative diseases and neural repair. His research is funded by two NIH grants.

Dr. Brann received the 2005 Outstanding Basic Science Teaching Award from the MCG School of Medicine.

Dr. Darrell W. Brann

Graduate Students Receive Awards

School of Graduate Studies Dean Gretchen Caughman presents neuroscience award to Jason Neihaus.

Two MCG graduate students received awards recently.

Pharmacology student Jason Niehaus received the inaugural Darrell W. Brann Scholarship Award in Neuroscience. The $1,000 annual scholarship, administered by the School of Graduate Studies and Institute of Neuroscience, was established and endowed for the next 10 years by Dr. Brann, neuroscientist and associate director of the Institute of Neuroscience. The award was created in support of the neurosciences Ph.D. program that began this year. In 2004, Mr. Niehaus earned a two-year predoctoral fellowship from the National Institutes of Health and won a scientific achievement award for his presentation at the annual meeting of the International Cannabinoid Research Society.

Jin-Na Min received the Institute of Molecular Medicine and Genetics Rasmussen Award for research excellence. The $500 scholarship award honors the founding director of IMMAG, the late Dr. Howard Rasmussen, and is funded by IMMAG faculty. Before enrolling at MCG, she spent six months working at MCG as a predoctoral fellow in the laboratory of Dr. Nahid Mivechi, associate professor of radiobiology. At the 2005 IMMAG retreat, she presented her research on two tumor suppressor genes that regulate tumor growth, "Genetic interplay between hsf1 and p53 in tumorigenesis." ➺

Dr. Nahid Mivechi (left) and Jin-Na Min in lab.

Dr. Cameron Named Associate Dean

Dr. Patricia Cameron

Dr. Patricia Lee Cameron, assistant dean for recruitment and admissions in the School of Graduate Studies, has been promoted to associate dean.

"Dr. Cameron has done an outstanding job as assistant dean since her appointment in 2002," said Dr. Gretchen Caughman, dean of the School of Graduate Studies. "As associate dean, she will continue to focus on the recruitment and admissions aspects of our programs as well as assist me in the day-to-day operations of the school."

Dr. Cameron is the director of undergraduate research programs and a member of the School of Graduate Studies Graduate Council, the MCG Student Training and Research Program Committee and the University System of Georgia Academic Committee on Graduate Work. She also is a member of the American Society for Cell Biology.

Dr. Cameron joined the MCG faculty in 2000 after completing a postdoctoral fellowship at MCG's Institute of Molecular Medicine and Genetics, where she is also an assistant professor of developmental neurobiology. She earned her Ph.D. in cell biology from Yale University in 1992. ➺

Medical College of Georgia
MedicineNEWS
Winter 2006

School of Medicine Increases Class Size

The School of Medicine will expand its class size next year by 5 percent, from 180 to 190, the first increase since fall 1974.

"One of our most important responsibilities as Georgia's health sciences university is to provide an excellent, diverse health care work force to serve our state," said MCG President Daniel W. Rahn. "This has never been more important than today with our aging population and our increased ability to prevent and treat disease."

In February 2005, the Association of American Medical Colleges recommended medical colleges increase enrollment by 15 percent over the next 15 years. The group predicted a serious physician shortage if trends continue.

The ratio of physicians per person in Georgia is already below the U.S. average. MCG officials hope their effort will help meet rising demands.

"We welcome this opportunity to help meet Georgia's growing need for physicians," said Dr. Ruth-Marie Fincher, vice dean of academic affairs for the School of Medicine. "We were able to matriculate this 5 percent without any significant modifications in the first two years of our education program. Anything beyond that would have required major changes in terms of faculty, facilities and equipment."

Lecture halls in the Hamilton Wing of the MCG Carl T. Sanders Research and Education Building will be renovated to accommodate more first- and second-year medical students. New sites for clinical training are being identified for third- and fourth-year students.

"It takes about a year to bring on a community-based site when you factor in identifying the site and the faculty development that must take place before students arrive," said Dr. T. Andrew Albritton, associate dean of curriculum for the School of Medicine.

Identification of these sites is already in the works for MCG's first regional clinical campus, the Georgia Southwest Clinical Campus headquartered in Albany, Ga. As the university accumulates more practices and opportunities in the region, the campus will help absorb the extra students.

"Georgia's public medical university is committed to steadily increasing (the number of) physicians to meet Georgia's needs as the population of Georgia continues to increase," said Dr. Steve J. Schwab, interim dean of the School of Medicine.

Kim Miller

Peacock Family Gives Library a Makeover

Dr. Lamar B. and Jane B. Peacock have improved education and aesthetics at the Medical College of Georgia.

The 1946 graduate of the MCG School of Medicine and his wife, a writer and editor, have transformed the MCG Department of Medicine library on the fifth floor of MCG Medical Center into a state-of-the art educational facility for faculty, staff and students.

The Dr. Lamar B. and Jane B. Peacock Medicine Library features a computer-to- projector hookup for PowerPoint presentations and a SMART Board system that allows residents and faculty to make notes and changes as they go, said Cameron Andrews, department administrator. The library also includes a DVD/videocassette recorder system to project educational material onto a screen, a document camera that projects X-rays and a computer room.

"On behalf of the Department of Medicine, we are truly grateful. This is wonderful," Dr. Steve Schwab, department chair and interim medical school dean, told Mrs. Peacock during the library's Nov. 4 grand opening. The library had not had a major renovation since the Sydenstricker Building of MCG Medical Center opened in 1976.

"Our son did tell us this was a badly needed renovation," Mrs. Peacock said of son, Dr. Lamar B. Peacock, who completed his internal medicine residency, including a year as chief resident, at MCG in 1993 and joined the faculty until 2003. "We just hope it will have a very long and very useful life."

DR. STEVE SCHWAB GIVES JANE B. PEACOCK A FRAMED COPY OF THE INVITATION TO THE OPENING OF THE LIBRARY.

Her husband could not attend the opening because of his health. "He appreciated so much his education here," Mrs. Peacock said. "He loved the practice of internal medicine, not just the intellectual challenge, but the fact that he could get close to and really care about his patients."

"My calls from Lamar are delightful," MCG President Daniel W. Rahn told Mrs. Peacock. "He will call me at 9 o'clock at night at home and tell me he has been thinking about what I should do and he's right. I really appreciate that, I appreciate his continued engagement with the institution and with our mission and purpose and the life of professional service that he set as an example for us."

The senior Dr. Peacock is an Albany, Ga., native. He graduated first in his class from MCG and completed an MCG internal medicine residency under Dr. Virgil Sydenstricker. He then went to the University of Virginia where he became one of the first physicians in the country to complete an allergy/immunology fellowship before setting up one of the first allergy practices in Atlanta. He has served as president of the Southeastern Allergy Association, the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology, the Alumni Association of the Medical College of Georgia School of Medicine, Inc., and the MCG Foundation, Inc. He and his wife live in Atlanta. ⊶

Toni Baker

Ellisons Receive MCG's Highest Honor

The Medical College of Georgia has presented its 2005 Vessel of Life Award to Drs. Robert G. and Lois T. Ellison.

MCG President Daniel W. Rahn presented the award, which honors professional achievement and contributions to society that enhance MCG's mission of education, research and service, at the annual President's Dinner Nov. 5.

"It is hard to imagine a couple that has had more impact on the Medical College of Georgia than Dr. Robert G. and Lois T. Ellison," Dr. Rahn said.

Dr. Robert Ellison, a 1943 School of Medicine graduate, joined the faculty in 1947 (see his obituary on page 2). He went on to become chief of cardiothoracic surgery, retiring in 1987 as Charbonnier Professor Emeritus and Chief Emeritus. His many contributions included performing Georgia's first open-heart operation using bypass in 1956, improving modified techniques for cardiothoracic surgery, modifying methods of cardiothoracic surgery training and improving treatment of esophageal and lung cancer.

Dr. Lois T. Ellison earned her medical degree from MCG in 1950, then completed a cardiopulmonary physiology fellowship. She joined the MCG faculty, where she helped develop the university's cardiopulmonary laboratory, serving as director until 1992. Her other roles at MCG have included associate dean for curriculum in the School of Medicine, provost and associate vice president for planning (hospitals and clinics). She retired as Professor Emeritus and Provost Emeritus in 2000, but stayed on as MCG's medical historian in residence.

"Despite an extraordinary body of achievement, the Ellisons are two of the nicest, most down-to-earth people you'll ever meet," Dr. Rahn said. "With two hallmarks in mind – exemplary lifetime achievement and extraordinary dedication to the Medical College of Georgia – I can say without a moment's hesitation that no one on earth is more deserving (of this award)."

"I'm thankful to MCG for giving us the opportunity in our lives to work with so many wonderful people," Dr. Lois Ellison said in accepting the award. "Our lives have been touched in many ways by the many people we've met here." ➸

THE VESSEL OF LIFE AWARD IS A BRONZE SCULPTURE DESIGNED BY KATHLEEN GIRDLER-ENGLER. IT IS DESCRIBED AS WATER FLOWING OUT OF A BOWL. THE BOWL REPRESENTS THE UNIVERSITY AND THE FLOWING WATER REPRESENTS THE NECESSITY FOR LIFE AND NATURE. THE HANDPRINT SIGNIFIES THE "HELPING HAND" THE RECIPIENT HAS PROVIDED.

"With two hallmarks in mind – exemplary lifetime achievement and extraordinary dedication to the Medical College of Georgia – I can say without a moment's hesitation that no one on earth is more deserving (of this award)."

–President Daniel W. Rahn

PRESIDENT RAHN PRESENTS AWARD TO DR. LOIS T. ELLISON.

Dr. Howell Named VSU Distinguished Alumnus

Valdosta State University

Dr. Charles Gordon Howell Jr., a 1973 graduate of the School of Medicine and an MCG pediatric surgeon, has received the 2005 Valdosta State University Distinguished Alumnus Award.

Dr. Howell earned an undergraduate degree in premedical studies from VSU in 1970.

After earning his MCG degree, Dr. Howell completed an internal medicine internship and general surgery residency, followed by a pediatric surgery fellowship at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia at the University of Pennsylvania.

He joined the MCG faculty in 1982 and is a professor of surgery and pediatrics. He also is co-director of the Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation Program since 1985, chief of pediatric surgery, medical director of operative services, surgeon-in-chief of the Children's Medical Center and vice chair of the Department of Surgery. Dr. Howell has trained hundreds of surgery residents and taught thousands of medical students. ➸

Dr. Fisher Receives National Teaching Honor

Dr. John F. Fisher

Dr. John F. Fisher, infectious disease physician and professor of medicine in the School of Medicine, is the inaugural recipient of the Infectious Disease Society of America's Clinical Teacher Award.

The award honors physicians who teach fellows, residents and medical students about clinical infectious diseases and also recognizes clinical excellence.

Dr. Fisher's skill in the lecture hall has spurred a generation of students into infectious disease careers, and his love of the practice of medicine is most evident in his compassion and enthusiasm at the bedside, colleagues said in nominating him for the award.

Dr. Fisher, who joined the MCG faculty in 1977, "rapidly developed an uncanny knack to simplify complex topics and connect with students and patients alike through wisdom, humor and metaphors," wrote Dr. J. Peter Rissing, chief of the MCG Section of Infectious Diseases, in the nomination.

Dr. Fisher has received more than 30 teaching awards during his tenure at MCG, including Educator of the Year Awards from the School of Medicine Classes of 2005, 2006 and 2007 in 2005. He also received the 2005 J. Willis Hurst Teaching Award from the American College of Physicians Georgia Chapter, which recognizes the best bedside teachers in the state.

Dr. Fisher is director of the medical microbiology component of the MCG sophomore curriculum. ➸

Medical College of Georgia
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A Message from the Dean

A recent *Business Week* special report, "Get Creative," features the concepts of experience and design as a formula for extraordinary success in organizations. The idea is to understand the human experience and design systems that cater to that experience. The article highlights the new practice of business schools partnering with design schools to offer multidisciplinary teaching of design thinking, methodology and strategy, thereby developing a culture of innovation. Synergy results from combining innovation, user insight and organizational strategy. Think about our students, our clients, our colleagues ... and, of course, alumni and other supporters.

For students and faculty, this culture of innovation results in the use of new technology to enhance instructional design. This culture also fosters a marked increase in opportunities to conduct relevant research and to collaborate with students on other campuses and from different ethnicities. Our traditional definition of classroom is being challenged by a greater capacity to learn, grow and interact with other scholars around the world from our home base in Georgia. The MCG School of Nursing is creating this environment for its students.

For our patients, this design innovation means greater access to better-quality health care services. For example, nurses now often take the lead in providing coordinated, managed care for the frail, the homebound and nursing home residents. With this change in methods of delivery comes a growing need to train future nurses for the different career options that will be available to them. The MCG School of Nursing is already connecting with companies that design national health care plans to inform our faculty and students about the changing face of managed care. Moreover, our emerging Nursing Faculty Practice will increase our ability to partner with communities throughout the state to service our citizens of greatest need.

For nurses in acute-care settings, the design manifests itself in cutting-edge techniques for health care delivery such as telehealth and the requirement for more advanced preparation. Hospitals' drive to achieve Magnet recognition by the American Nurses Credentialing Center is a direct result of these changes. We at the School of Nursing now can partner with health systems to provide a variety of innovative, advanced nursing educational programs that will facilitate this transition, and we have already begun work in the local health care community to address this need.

Finally, our alumni and supporters can be proud to be associated with an organization that is forward-thinking in its efforts to prepare nurses for their ever-changing roles in health care delivery and design. Building upon its tradition of excellence, the MCG School of Nursing is strengthening its national reputation as an innovator in nursing education.

This design-oriented culture at the MCG School of Nursing is driven by clinical and research nurse scholars who are creative and are beginning to embrace design, as both concept and method. As health care evolves, and we develop new programs and courses to prepare nurses for the future, we will stay abreast of the latest trends. Yes, ready or not, today's health care requires out-of-the-box thinking while insisting on quality. At the MCG School of Nursing, we are ready! ❧

Ever onward and upward,

Lucy N. Marion

Dr. Lucy Marion
Dean, School of Nursing

School of Nursing Receives $1 Million Grant

The Robert W. Woodruff Foundation has awarded $995,000 to the Medical College of Georgia School of Nursing to support its new doctorate of nursing practice program, the 10th of its kind in the nation.

The gift from the Atlanta-based Woodruff Foundation, a private organization that supports charitable, scientific and educational activities, is the School of Nursing's largest from a private foundation.

"We thank the Woodruff Foundation for helping MCG progress advanced-nursing education in our region," said Dr. Lucy Marion, dean of the MCG School of Nursing and a leader in the national DNP movement. "We look forward to preparing a critical mass of doctorally prepared nurse clinicians through increased collaboration with other graduate schools of nursing throughout Georgia."

MCG's partner in the initiative, Emory University's Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing, has been awarded $500,000 through the same grant. By offering distance-training options, the partnership will allow Emory faculty to enroll in MCG's doctorate of nursing practice program and MCG faculty to attend Emory's postgraduate program for clinical educators.

"This partnership provides an example of how the public and private sector can work together to address the severe shortage of qualified nursing faculty and clinicians in Georgia," said Dr. Marla Salmon, dean and professor of the Emory School of Nursing. "We are excited about the opportunity to work with MCG in advancing the capacity of nurses to improve care and meet ever increasing needs for nursing services."

The doctorate of nursing practice focuses on clinical and management expertise necessary to improve outcomes in health care practice, leadership and education. The program encourages nurses to stay in health care practice and contribute to issues faced in the field.

"Before this program was developed, nursing was the only health profession without a practice doctorate," said Dr. Saundra Turner, chair of the MCG Department of Biobehavioral Nursing. "Graduates of our program will be nursing leaders with a global perspective, able to collaborate with physicians and other health care providers to optimize patient care."

"Graduates of our program will be nursing leaders with a global perspective, able to collaborate with physicians and other health care providers to optimize patient care."

–Dr. Saundra Turner

The program also will help alleviate the national nursing shortage by producing more qualified nursing professors, allowing nursing schools to enroll more students, according to Dr. Turner.

The first cohort of doctorate of nursing practice students, consisting of 13 MCG School of Nursing faculty, began this year. The class size is expected to increase to 20 to 30 students in the next two years.

The DNP curriculum includes 40 graduate semester hours over four semesters, covering trends in effective care, methods of care delivery and concepts in evidence-based care.

"For the first time ever, nursing doctoral education includes the financial aspects of health care," said Dr. Georgia Narsavage, School of Nursing associate dean for academic affairs. "Nurses with this degree will be equal players amongst those making budget and finance decisions."

Requirements for the program include a master's degree in nursing or associated program of study related to a specialty area, a graduate school admissions test, current professional nurse licensure and specialty certification as appropriate.

Emory University will offer a 12-credit hour program, the Clinical Educator Certificate, to graduate nursing practice students. The certificate focuses on evidence-based clinical teaching and evaluation techniques, and can be pursued before, during or after the doctorate of nursing practice course of study.

For more information, including program requirements, contact Dr. Turner at sturner@mcg.edu or 706-721-4807.

Kim Miller

Grant Helps Extend Healthy Grandparents Program

The School of Nursing is extending the services of its Healthy Grandparents Program with the help of a grant from the Area Agency on Aging.

The grant opens the program to 12 additional counties in Georgia and extends services to other non-parent caregivers in all of the 14 counties it serves. The original program was open to grandparents raising grandchildren in Richmond and Columbia counties.

Program services will be extended to residents of Burke, Glascock, Hancock, Jefferson, Jenkins, Lincoln, McDuffie, Screven, Taliaferro, Warren, Washington and Wilkes counties. Residents in those counties will have access to telephone referrals for a variety of issues from health care and housing to food banks and education.

"People can call the service to ask questions and make sure that they're getting the aid that they qualify for," says Judith Salzer, an assistant professor of nursing at MCG and director of the Healthy Grandparents Program. "We want to make sure that people are knowledgeable about what their rights are and what their children's rights are."

The expanded program also will offer a monthly support group meeting. Topics for those meetings will include everything from parent/grandparent health issues to the behavioral differences between children today and children in the past. Group meetings will be held in the School of Nursing.

The ultimate goal is to make MCG a resource center for all relative care, Ms. Salzer says. Those who use the services will have their needs assessed and be referred to agencies from across the area that can help.

"Interestingly enough, grandparents and other relatives often think that they're the only ones who are doing this," she says. "This service helps them get to know others and network with other people who are in the same situation."

The MCG Healthy Grandparents Program currently provides services to 160 families with 300 children. For more information on the program and the upcoming changes, call Ms. Salzer at 706-721-4878 or School of Nursing Social Worker Mike Patton at 706-721-6227.

Jennifer Hilliard

JUANITA MACK RECEIVES A HUG AND PLAQUE FROM MIKE PATTON CELEBRATING HER GRADUATION FROM MENTOR TRAINING.

Dr. Narsavage Appointed Fellow

Dr. Georgia L. Narsavage, associate dean for academic affairs in the School of Nursing, has been named a fellow of the American Academy of Nursing.

The American Academy of Nursing is made up of 1,500 nursing leaders in education, management, practice and research. The academy aims to anticipate national and international trends in health care and address resulting issues of health care knowledge and policy.

Dr. Narsavage, who specializes in respiratory nursing practice, came to MCG this year after serving as associate dean for academic programs and director of the Doctorate of Nursing Program at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland.

She serves on the board of directors for the American Thoracic Society and is a member of the National League for Nursing, the American Nurses Association, the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners and the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculty.

Dr. Narsavage earned a bachelor's degree in nursing from the University of Maryland in 1969, a master's degree in nursing from the College of Misericordia in Dallas and a Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania, where she also completed a postdoctoral fellowship. In 2002, she earned an adult nurse practitioner certificate from Case Western Reserve University.

Men Should Know Family History of Prostate Cancer

Information can be elusive in the fight against prostate cancer, the second most common type of cancer in American men, but Medical College of Georgia researchers are adding to the knowledge base.

"Sadly, we don't know many of the causes of prostate cancer yet," said Dr. Sally Weinrich, a professor in the School of Nursing who studies the disease. "We do know that if the disease is hereditary, it is usually more aggressive, is diagnosed at an early age and is more likely to kill. A lot of prostate cancer genetic research is currently being conducted. Unfortunately, we don't currently have genetic testing for hereditary prostate cancer."

Some possible environmental causes also have been identified, including high dietary fat and obesity.

DR. SALLY P. WEINRICH DISCUSSES PROSTATE CANCER WITH JOE PEARSON, A MEMBER OF AUGUSTA CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL BLACK LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE AGAINST CANCER.

"Men must ask specific questions about their family history. It's important to distinguish between other causes of urinary symptoms and cancer and to find out at what age men in their family were diagnosed."

–Dr. Sally P. Weinrich

"Our research has shown that people with a higher body mass index are at a higher risk of getting prostate cancer," said Dr. Martha Terris, a urologist and professor of surgery in the MCG School of Medicine. "Among the men studied with cancer, a higher BMI was also linked to a more aggressive form of the disease."

Men can increase their chances of survival by knowing their family history. If multiple family members have been diagnosed with prostate cancer and the onset was at an early age, the risk is higher, Dr. Weinrich said.

"Men must ask specific questions about their family history," she says. "It's important to distinguish between other causes of urinary symptoms and cancer and to find out at what age men in their family were diagnosed."

Other preventive measures include learning about the benefits and limitations of prostate cancer screenings and making an informed decision, decreasing or stopping smoking, decreasing fat in the diet and increasing fruits and vegetables—particularly foods with cooked tomatoes, which contain lycopene. Lycopene may reduce cell growth of prostate cancer.

"The best things that men and the women who love them can do is to be informed," Dr. Weinrich says. "They should know their family history and follow the research, too. We'll have answers in 10 years that we don't have today." ➸

Jennifer Hilliard

Reflections

A Flood of Emotions

by Mary Bannan

I thought I'd seen it all.

As a congenital heart surgery nurse for MCG Health System, I have a front-row view of the fragility of life. And as training officer for the MCG-sponsored Georgia 4 Disaster Medical Assistance Team, I'm no stranger to catastrophes. I've been at ground zero of natural disasters and the 9-11 terrorist attacks.

But nothing could have prepared me for Hurricane Katrina. The only word that comes to mind is 'devastating.'

I traveled to New Orleans with Team Commander Jane Williams, a nurse, and team members Jeff Orledge, an MCG physician, and Benje Thompson and Ryan Goodson, both emergency medical technicians. We arrived in the New Orleans area on Aug. 28, the day after the hurricane made landfall.

We were assigned to the airport, which served as a field hospital for the entire area, where we triaged and treated medically needy evacuees.

It was awe-inspiring and frightening. I felt overwhelmed that we couldn't do enough for people. We had supplies and equipment, but the volume of patients was staggering. We saw severe rashes and beginning infections on feet and legs, a sad consequence of people fleeing their homes in pajamas without shoes. Critically ill patients came in with heat stroke and dehydration.

Some had been exposed to contaminated floodwater. They were frightened, dirty and psychologically fragile. Most had fled without their medications. Blood sugars and blood pressures were high.

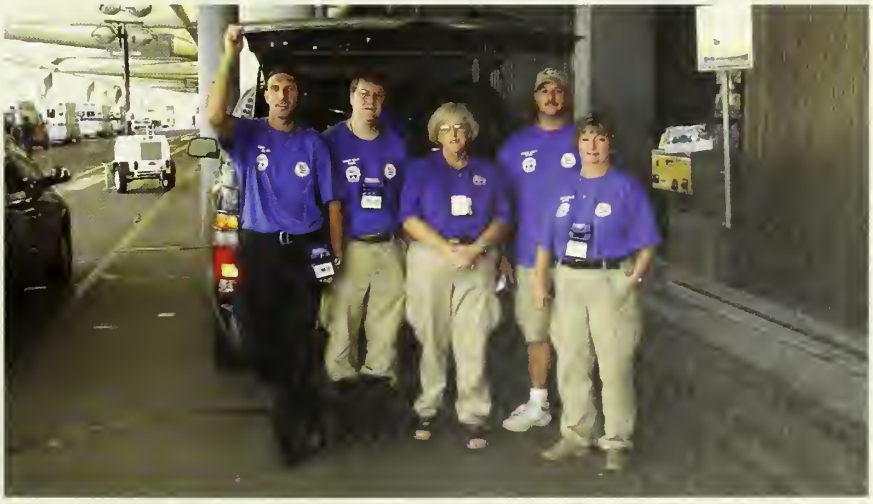
A 25-year-old man showed up in the throes of a severe asthma attack. We tried calming him by talking to him. He told an amazing story of escaping his home by floating out in his bathtub. As he floated down the streets of New Orleans, he came across a baby floating in a cooler and rescued the child. He spent a few days in the Convention Center and grew so depressed with the conditions that he contemplated suicide.

His story was so touching and he was such an amazing person that I wanted to stay in touch with him. He sent me an e-mail just the other day. He is safe and sound in Arkansas and has already found a job. He is starting his life over.

Also fresh on my mind are the husband-and-wife Russian exchange students. The wife had interferon for her multiple sclerosis, but both were frantic because they had been without ice for the medication for several days. Fortunately, we had ice at the airport and were able to help them.

I am profoundly grateful to those who aided in our efforts, including my colleagues at MCG Health System who supported my participation.

The resounding lesson for me: Be grateful for what you have. Your way of life, or your life itself, could be snatched away in an instant. ⊶



DMAT team members Ryan Goodson (from left), Jeffrey Orledge, Mary Bannan, Benje Thompson and Jane Williams

Medical College of Georgia Today welcomes submissions to the Reflections column of the magazine. Typed essays (approx. 750 words long) reflecting a professional or personal experience of a member of the MCG community should be submitted to:
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Feting Our Friends

MCG honored many of its most dedicated supporters during dinners Nov. 4-5 for founding members of its Milton Antony Guild and members of its President's Club, respectively. Antony Guild members invest in MCG's future by including the institution in their estate-planning. President's Club members donated at least $1,000 to MCG during fiscal 2004-05 or more than $10,000 during their lifetime.

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